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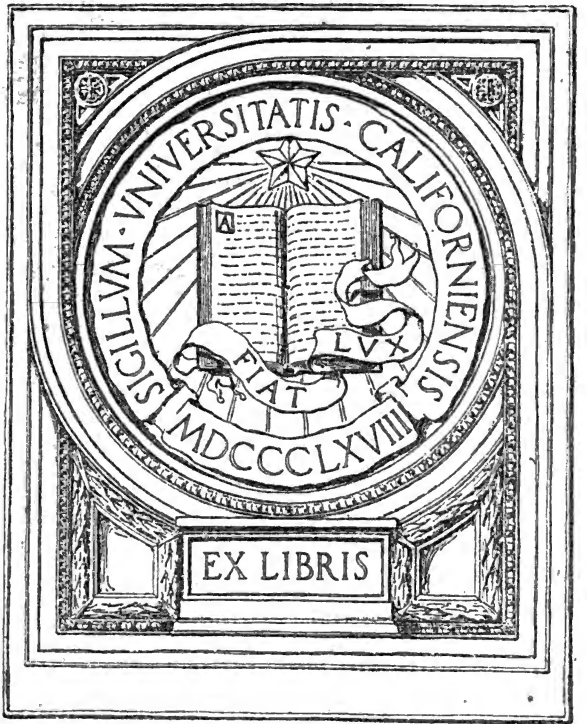

AN

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

DIALOGUES OF PLATO.

BY

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IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

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TO THE VERY REVEREND AND REVEREND THE

ELECTORS TO DR. WHITE'S PROFESSORSHIP

OF

Moral Philosophy

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

THESE PAGES

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

The following pages contain the substance of some articles on Plato, which were permitted by the kindness of the Editor of the British Critic to appear in that Review. They were intended principally to assist students in forming a right judgment on the general scope and object of the Platonic Dialogues; and the subject may be continued hereafter in some other form. But they are now republished at present with the same hope; and broken up into chapters for the greater convenience of the readers.

Appended to them is another paper, which I have been kindly allowed to reprint from the Quarterly Review, containing some remarks on the rise of the new Platonism, which were thrown together, in per-

haps too light a form, but with a view to lighter readers. It is added here in the hope of drawing the attention of the student to the distinction between the old and new Platonism, of warning him against repudiating the old on account of the faults of the new; putting him on his guard against the revival of a Pantheistic system with which the present age seems threatened, and suggesting to him the proper mode of studying history, whether of states or of philosophy, by placing side by side analogous periods and events.

I cannot but fear that in some places opinions have been here expressed in too decided a tone; which, however, was naturally suggested by the authoritative character of a Review. But I should deeply regret, if any thing I wrote tended to encourage in young students a habit of presumptuous dogmatism, or of pronouncing too positively, except where the statements put forward are declarations of a higher and competent authority. In this case, to hesitate and falter is to abandon our first duty, both as men and as Christians, of witnessing boldly to the truth.

As these remarks have already been made the subject of various misconceptions and censures on their first appearance, I may be permitted to say, that in publishing them I had no wish to supersede religion by metaphysics, or Christianity by Platonism, or the Church of England by Popery. I have endeavoured to take every opportunity of warning the young reader against removing philosophy from its proper place of subordination to Revelation and the Church; and to distinguish carefully between that Catholicism which is essential to Christianity, and of which the Church of England makes its boast, and Popery, which in its real nature is most uncatholic, and little but the spirit of Dissent under the form of a Church.

If, however, any expression has escaped me which, either in a natural or forced interpretation, can imply an opinion at variance with the spirit or the doctrines of that Church to which I have the happiness to belong, I beg at once to retract it, not only nominally, but from my heart.

OXFORD,
October 29, 1841.

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The references are made, except where it is otherwise specified, to the little pocket edition of Plato published at Leipsic by Tauchnitz, as most likely to be in the hands of students.

HORÆ PLATONICÆ.

CHAPTER I.

It has become a trite observation of thoughtful men, that in all around us in the present day there is a sound and a movement—a working in the human mind—a stirring in the waters, which betokens the approach of some great change. Not only in this country, but throughout the civilized world, there are symptoms of a crisis in opinion as well as in society. The two cannot be separated. Old forms are breaking up, and new are thickening on each other. Wider scenes of action seem opened to practical minds, and deeper mines of thought for speculation. There is in the many an eager restless craving for some vague good, which all anticipate and none define; an exultation at coming prospects; a contempt for the poverty of the past, and the imperfection of the present; a sense of newly awakened powers; a passion for new sympathies and combinations; a general baring and exposure of the human mind, as among men who have cast off restraint, and are about to enter together on some great enterprise. And where the current is not rushing forward with an accelerated movement, it is turning in an extraordinary way, and remounting back to its source.

Those who think, and those who think not, all seem impressed with something of a mysterious action. And even the few who take no part in the crowd, are sitting with anxious eye watching for the end.

To a philosophical observer, the symptoms of this singular state of the human mind are full of interest; though they may appear in seemingly very insulated facts, and the connexion of them with the general principle may seem forced.

One of them is a remarkable phenomenon, which cannot have escaped the observer of general literature. Within the last few years, simultaneously, and with little connection, a general tendency to revive the study of Plato has sprung up in the most intellectual parts of Europe, in Germany, France, and England. In Germany it is returning after a short suspension. In France appearing for the first time. In England recovering slowly, and perhaps never likely to assume a very prominent position, from circumstances, happy circumstances, which supersede its necessity. In Germany, one of its most eloquent advocates, Van Heusde[1], has expressly stated the feelings under which he is anxious to restore it. He describes the weariness and disheartened apathy which has followed from the rapid succession of modern theories, each rising on the wreck of its predecessor, each standing firm and domineering for a time, and then sinking suddenly into ruin. He seems to feel rather than to acknowledge, that the only security against this dangerous and miserable oscillation of sects and opinions, must be found in the predominance of authority; and he proposes to revive the study of Plato as the philosopher who concentrated most perfectly in his system the excellences of the schools that preceded him, and the sanction of those that have followed. In France,

[1] Init. Phil. Pl. vol. iii. ch. 1.

as might naturally be expected[1] from the state of that unhappy country, where depth of thought has been so rare, and philosophy is just beginning to run the career which in Germany it seems to have completed, the supposed sceptical and eclectical character of Platonism appears chiefly to have excited attention. And by a most remarkable mistake, not indeed uncommon, but which proves how little men have entered into the real spirit and object of Plato's writings, the name of a philosopher, whose whole efforts were systematically and energetically addressed to the establishment of an immutable belief in immutable truths external to man, and guaranteed by the testimony of men, has been chosen as the index of a spirit which treats all former systems with contempt, and proposes to raise upon their ruins a new structure of belief based on that, which must overturn itself, the reason of an individual, or of a sect.

In England the study of the Greek philosophy has been chiefly confined to the University of Oxford, which providentially has been saved from setting the seal of its sanction to either Paley or Locke; and has adhered firmly to Aristotle as the text-book in her plan of education. In addition to the soundness and depth of his views, the technical and systematic form of the Ethics of Aristotle renders it far fitter for such a purpose than any extant work of any period; and no greater mischief could be done than to abandon it for any other less formal treatise, even for the nobler and more elevating philosophy of Plato himself. Within the last few years, however, more attention has been gradually drawn to the writings of Plato. Unconsciously, and without recognizing fully the extraordinary affinity of his views to the principles which are once more forcing themselves

[1] See Cousin's Lectures.

into life, and struggling against the errors of this day, young men especially have been captivated by the grandeur, the warmth, and even the mystical profoundness of his thoughts, so unlike the meanness, and coldness, and barrenness of our prevailing materialism and rationalism. Plato has been to them in philosophy, what the records of the middle ages are to chronicles of dry facts, and to the inventions of fiction, as a middle term between truth and falsehood—reality and poetry. He has amused, elevated, and kindled them into many good affections, but without inspiring confidence. They look on him as a noble enthusiast, full of high feeling, and magnificent fancies, but often condescending to subtleties, which are a mere exercise of ingenuity, and indulging in abstractions too high for any practical application. They do not venture to call him in the words of Bacon "Tumidus poeta, cavillator urbanus, theologus mente captus," but they regard him, as so many writers have done before them, more in the form than in the matter of his works; more as the "Homer of Philosophy [1]," as "speaking in the language of Jupiter [2]," as the "master of Demosthenes [3]," "in irridendis oratoribus orator summus [4];" or to descend still lower, as the biographer of the most interesting character in antiquity, as the Boswell of Socrates—than as the "*Ille Deus Noster*" of the creator of Roman philosophy [5], as "the truth-loving Plato" of Clement [6], as the "Maximus Philosophorum" of Ambrose [7], as the "Grecian Moses" of Numenius—as, in the words of Augustin, "ille inter discipulos Socratis, qui non immerito excellentissimâ gloriâ claruit, qui omnino cæteros obscuraret [8]," as the

[1] Quintil. lib. x. 1. [2] Cicero.
[3] Plutar. in Vit. Mag. p. 1555. [4] Cicer. Orat. 1, 11.
[5] Cicer. ad Att. iv. 16. [6] Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v.
[7] De Obit. Theod. s. 14. [8] August. de Civit. Dei, lib. viii. c. 8.

"prudentissimus philosophorum" of Jerome, as the "omnium sapientissimus" of Lactantius [1], as the "apex columenque philosophorum" of Arnobius, as he who, in the words of Eusebius [2], "alone of all the Greeks reached to the vestibule of truth and stood upon its threshold"—as the "former of Athanasius [3]," and "the converter of Augustin [4]."

It requires indeed considerable knowledge of the history of philosophy to appreciate the whole influence which Plato has exercised upon the human mind; and, still more, a thorough acquaintance with his works to comprehend their real scope and depth. It is therefore not surprising that such an erroneous estimate of his character should generally prevail; so that, as Schleiermacher well observes [5], his brilliant passages should have dazzled the eyes of students, until they forgot that in the mind of Plato these were but resting-stones and reliefs (necessary concessions to human weakness) to enable the mind to ascend to a far higher range of thought.

And yet there are certain eras in the history of human reason, in which the operation of Platonism comes out in a form too striking to permit any doubt of its power, or disrespect to its memory. It was something more than eloquence and fancy, which Cicero, perplexed as he sometimes seems to be with the dialectical manœuvres of Plato, discovered in those theories, through which he proposed to conduct the spirit of philosophy into Rome. It was not mere ingenuity and abstraction, which induced the Reformers of heathenism to adopt his name, so that, in the words of Augustin [6], "recentiores quique philosophi

[1] De Fals. Rel. lib. i. [2] Præp. Evang. l. xiii. c. 13.
[3] Vit. Athan. edit. Bened. vol. i. [4] Confessions of Augustin.
[5] Preface to Introduction to Dialogues.
[6] De Civit. Dei, lib. viii. c. 10.

nobilissimi, quibus Plato sectandus placuit, noluerint se dici Peripateticos aut academicos, sed Platonicos." Something more than ordinary reason (and so the wisest Christians always thought) must have informed that spirit which, after lying dormant for three centuries, was resuscitated in the first age of Christianity, and entered into that body of Rationalism, which, whether under the name of Gnosticism, or the Alexandrian School, rose up by the side of the True Faith to wrestle with it in its untried strength, and to bring out its full form, in precision, by struggles with an antagonist like itself. Once more at the revival of literature Plato was selected as the leader of the new philosophical spirit which was to throw off the wretched yoke of Romanism, and with it too often the law of Christianity [1].

The revival of deep thought in Germany was in the same manner marked with his name. And in our own country the battle with Hobbes, and the worst forms of philosophical infidelity, was carried on by Cudworth and Smith, and by the deepest of our sound theologians, with the weapons of Plato. A minuter view of the history of human reason would still further illustrate his influence, wherever his philosophy has prevailed. It would suggest also a remarkable contrast between the effects of his system and of that of Aristotle. Wherever Plato has led, he has elevated and improved the human mind. He has been followed too far—farther than Christians may follow him; and many fatal errors have been sheltered under his name. But those which have really sprung from him have been errors of the heart—errors which have not degraded human nature, nor

[1] See Preface of Acciaolus to his translation of Theodoret, Curat. Græc. Affect. and Præfatio of Marsilius Ficinus ad Plotinum, Creuzer edit. vol. i. p. 19.

stifled the principle of virtue. Even the scepticism of the later academies offers no exception, for it had no authority whatever in the genuine principles of Plato. Enthusiasm, mysticism, and fanaticism, have been the extravagances of Platonism; coldness, materialism, and scepticism, the perversions of Aristotle. Each, when retained in his proper subordination, has been a useful servant to the cause of Christianity. But the work which Plato has performed is far higher than that of Aristotle; one disciplined the affections—the other drilled the intellect; one aided in sinking deep the truths of Christianity, and expanding its form—the other complicated and entangled its parts by endeavouring to reduce them to system; one supplied materials—the other lent instruments to shape them; one fairly met the enemies of Christianity upon the ground of reason—the other secretly gave way to them, without seeming to desert the standard of authority; one, when he rebelled, rebelled openly, and threw up heresies—the other never rebelled, but engendered and supported corruption.

Notwithstanding these characteristic distinctions—and Degerando in an eloquent passage [1] will point out still more—it would be as erroneous to oppose the two systems to each other as contradictory poles, as to assert, in the words of Cicero, that their differences are purely verbal. In fundamental principles they agree, as all must agree who study one common nature. They spring from one base, but separate into two heads, rising far above all others, meeting us at every turn as we trace the stream of thought in later ages, the fathers as it were of all the great subordinate groups which lie around them—the "two twin peaks," the "bifidum cacumen" of the Greek and of human philosophy.

In the empire which Aristotle and Plato severally

[1] Systèmes de la Philosoph. vol. ii.

and successively enjoyed over the human mind, they possessed many advantages in common. They were both, to use even Bacon's words as taken from the midst of his coarsest abuse, among the most gifted of mankind, "inter maxima mortalium ingenia." Both were profound observers, and observers of those facts which come home to all our bosoms, and interest all ages, because they lie at the root of all science and all life, the facts of human nature. Both, more or less, were thrown upon the resources of their own reason —cut off by local revolutions and the "spirit of the age" from immediate connection with the great deposits of Oriental tradition, and compelled, like men upon a desert island, to frame a habitation for their reason from chance materials on the spot, and fragments of scattered wreck. Greek philosophy is in fact the perfection of pure rationalism—from this it derived its energy, and in this, rightly employed, we find its value.

As rationalism, it necessarily took the form of system, at least in the mind of its author. Every part which did not fasten into and cohere with the primary hypothesis was necessarily rejected. Every connection between truths was marked and brought to light. The whole chain of dependent facts was evolved and laid out to be examined; the most delicate shades of truth and falsehood were scrupulously distinguished; and since, for the satisfaction of reason, and in the absence of external authority, no science could exist without demonstration, not only was the whole building solidly and formally cemented, but every stone was rung before it was fixed in its place. It is this accurate, technical, systematic form, which gives the Greek philosophy its great utility in education, or rather makes it essential to any sound scheme of education. It can be found no where else; and without it we could no more teach the *science* of morals, in a

scientific form, even possessing, as we do, all its great truths laid down in the Scriptures, than we could instruct in philology by the works of orators and poets without grammars, or teach religion to the young by the Bible without catechisms and articles. To speak of system, indeed, as applied to the works of Plato, will sound very strange to those who have only seen them bit by bit, and probably from a false position. They seem a collection of fragments—here a line and there a line—hint and hypothesis, doubt and dogmatism, feeling and reason, cold mathematical abstraction and the most gorgeous poetry, the drama and the lecture, the serious and the ridiculous, all thrown together with a hand careless in the profuseness of its riches. They bear no more resemblance to the rigid form, determinate proportion, and sharp clear outline of the treatises of Aristotle, than the rough shapeless splashes of scene-painting, to the finish and precision of a miniature. And yet there is art in each—more art and more system in the scene, than in the miniature. In the one indeed it lies open to every eye; in the other it is concealed in the artist's mind; and not till he places us in the position from which we are intended to see it, and the portions are properly arranged, and the lights are duly thrown, will those rude unsightly daubings shape themselves into life and beauty [1].

[1] This illustration is borrowed from a fact: a person went behind the scenes of Drury Lane on the night of a splendid melodrama. In crossing the stage he stumbled over a great board, over which some one apparently had emptied a bucket of red paint, and mopped it off with ink and water. He was on the point of kicking it away, when the scene-shifter cried out in an agony, "Sir, Sir, take care, what are you about there, that's *the bridge*, Sir—Mr. Stansfield's bridge—it's the thing that draws the houses." And when he went back to the boxes, he discovered the ruin which he was on the point of causing, by destroying the most striking feature in a landscape worthy of a Claude. Let men, young men espe-

This remark leads to another advantage in the Greek philosophy, the exquisite beauty of its form. Whether it was climate, or natural temperament, or education, or social circumstances, that gave to the Greeks their delicate perception of universal beauty, no people ever existed in whose happiness it was so necessary an ingredient, or to whom it was so profusely ministered by the genius of their composers. Their whole nature was in some sort sensualized. And truth stripped of grace and music could no more reach their mind, than religion could touch their heart, except as veiled under a gorgeous mythology. Much of what has been called the poetry of Plato is a concession to this popular weakness. Its occasional extravagance, especially as exhibited in the Phædrus, is an intentional and avowed satire. But the dramatic vividness of the dialogue, the harmony of rhythm, the full calm flow of thought and language, and the burst of passionate inspiration which make Plato the "Homer of Philosophers"—these are all his own—a simple unaffected effluence from his own nature—the instinctive, unconscious creation of an ardent and susceptible mind, gifted not only with a national acuteness of taste, but brought, by the very theory which possessed it, to that feeling and temper, from which neither discord nor meanness can flow, and by which every word is grace, because every thought is goodness. Even Aristotle is not destitute of this grace of external form. But in him it is of a totally different character,—cold, colourless, and still, like the oldest and grandest Grecian sculpture; nothing rich, nothing superfluous; the words clinging to the thoughts like moistened drapery to a marble statue, and giving beauty by transparency alone. Still there is beauty

cially, remember that there are many such bridges in Plato, and place themselves in the boxes before they purpose to kick them away.

of form, and beauty in perfect harmony with the thoughts which it clothes. And how entirely this principle of correspondence prevails, cannot be better seen than by imagining the syllogisms of Aristotle loaded with the robings of Plato, and the grand flowing thoughts of Plato left bare beneath the thin veil of Aristotle.

This beauty of external form is not the least—it is perhaps the greatest source of the influence of the Grecian philosophy. It is also a peculiar condition required in an instrument of education. Those at least will acknowledge this, who believe with Plato in the close harmony of soul and body; in the analogy of beauty to itself wherever it really exists, in sound or language, colour or feeling, proportion or virtue; in the identity of real beauty and real goodness, and therefore in the necessity of providing for the young, as our Maker has provided for us, an external creation of loveliness to be the type, and monitor, and preparation for an internal creation of virtue.

"We must seek out," he says in the Republic [1], "for those who are to supply us with the forms of art, men who, by instinct, can trace out the springs of grace and beauty; that dwelling as in a sanctuary of health, the young may imbibe good from all around them—from every work, and sight, and sound, whence aught may strike their sense—like airs that are wafting health from purest climes, and step by step from childhood are changing them into the image of goodness, and into likeness, and love, and harmony with the beauty of truth."

[1] Lib. iii. p. 102.

CHAPTER II.

THESE few observations may point out generally why the state of Grecian philosophy in our great schools of Christian education requires to be diligently watched; and, in some degree, why the course, which it takes, indicates, like a float upon the water, the direction of the current of the times. It is the great instrument of education still. It always has been the great stimulus to the activity of the human mind. The study of it has gone hand in hand with advancing civilization. The loss of it has been followed by decay not only in science, but in art, and in all things to which art ministers.

It would be interesting to trace out this remarkable fact historically, and also to examine the various relations, which have at different periods existed between the Greek Philosophy and Christianity; and to ascertain the true principles, upon which an alliance may be established between them with safety and advantage to each. The former inquiry would supply the answer to the wretched and ignorant clamour in behalf of "physical science and useful knowledge" as a substitute in education for the Greek Philosophy. The latter will not be necessary so long as the Church of England retains her true position, and insensibly preserves the balance between her several faculties and functions, by recognizing external authority as a control over individual opinion. It is the operation of this great maxim which has easily and secretly hitherto, but most efficaciously, enabled the University of Oxford to exercise her students in the very

centre of scepticism—in systems founded wholly on rationalism, and therefore full of poison, without risking any infection. She has taught them to reason and prove, without making reason and proof essential conditions of belief. She has inspired them with reverence for heathens, without forgetting themselves to be Christians. She has put into their hands the weapons which have so often been turned against the truth, without tempting their employment against herself. And the humility, sobriety, and thoughtfulness, which her course of study tends to stamp upon their characters, both in religion and in social life, is the best answer to the problem of Tertullian, which can be solved in no other way :

"Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid Academiæ et Ecclesiæ? quid hæreticis et Christianis? Nostra institutio de Porticu Salomonis est, qui et ipse tradiderat Dominum in simplicitate cordis esse quærendum. Viderint qui Stoicum, et Platonicum et Dialecticum Christianismum protulerunt."—*Tertull. de Præscript.*

Without however entering further into this question at present, it may not be uninteresting to point out some of those peculiar principles in the philosophy of Plato, which seem in England to have found a congenial soil in the spirit of the present day, and which, simultaneously indeed, but under far other circumstances than in Germany and France, will probably take root and spread.

In England, Plato will not be selected as our guide, because we want authority for moral truth; for we possess such authority already, far higher and far more conclusive than any testimony of his—in the witness of the Church. Nor will his name be advanced as a sanction for that foolish eclectical vanity which would place itself in the centre of all systems, like a low-born usurper in the midst of conquered sovereigns, to judge, condemn, applaud, or ridicule,

taking from each what we choose, and casting off the rest in scorn; while all truth is subjected to the test of our arbitrary fancies, and far wiser men than ourselves are insulted by our contemptuous independence. This is the eclectical spirit which it has been proposed to revive in France—very different from the eclectical maxims of the Alexandrian school, which sought in different systems for one common acknowledged stock of truth, rather than for community in error; and directly opposed to Plato, who combined indeed much from others, but never lost sight of an hereditary doctrine, on which all others were to be engrafted, whether he traced it openly to the East, or revived it without name from Pythagoras.

To take from a competent authority a system which may afterwards be enlarged, or modified, or defined by experience and by the testimony of others, but which in every inquiry is the basis upon which the enlargement proceeds, is a wise, and a necessary rule. It is the process of nature in the development of the understanding, just as much as in the expansion of the embryo body. The whole oak lies hid in the acorn; but its fibres shoot out, and spread, by assimilating to themselves the nutriment which lies about its roots.

This is sound eclecticism. But to acknowledge no leading system—to receive nothing from authority—to become what Bacon erroneously longed to see, while he confessed that it had never existed, "of so constant and severe a mind as to have determined and tasked ourselves utterly to abolish theories and common notions, and to apply our intellect altogether smoothed and even to particulars anew;" this, which is the plan contemplated in the rationalistic eclecticism of France, and is very much affected by men in this age, in pure wilfulness, without the pretensions of

philosophy, is as impossible from the nature of man, as it would be destructive to all knowledge whatever. We may as well expect a tree to spring up except from a seed, or a merchant to accumulate wealth with neither capital nor credit to commence with.

In England, at least so long as the education of the English nation is carried on by the Church, we shall not tolerate any such absurdities. We shall not prohibit, but rather encourage all experiment, all reasoning, all proof, all additions to our knowledge, which really are additions. But we shall not launch men upon the sea without giving them charts, and compasses, and sounding lines. We shall not expect them to move on without some firm foundation to move upon. We shall not call upon them to grow while we are cutting off their roots, or to become rich while we are reducing them to poverty. We shall ensure them a capital of knowledge, and that knowledge will be Christianity—and Christianity as it is countersigned, and guaranteed by the best of all possible securities, the witness of the Church.

This then is the spirit in which all philosophy may be made a most valuable instrument of education—Grecian philosophy especially, in an education, whose subject is man in his relation to the spiritual world—and Platonism most of all, at a time when a vast harvest of follies are springing up in the country, precisely the same as those, against which his highest powers were directed, and which must be crushed and rooted out by the whole force of truth and reason—by the truth of God in revelation, and by the reason of man in philosophy.

CHAPTER III.

No men have more mistaken the nature of Plato's system, than those who have regarded it as as a speculative fabric, such as men of powerful intellect have wrought out at times in schools and cloisters, when the tranquillity of society enabled them to think, without any necessity for action. Much, if not all, of the Eastern philosophy was of this cast. It sprung up like a tree in the desert, very beautiful, but very useless, under a fixed and changeless atmosphere, and perfect in all its outlines from the absence of any thing to disturb it. Such also was much of the new Alexandrian speculations, until Julian brought them to bear practically upon the purification of the Heathen Polytheism. Such also was scholasticism, and many of the rival theories which have since sprung up in Germany under the stimulus of a craving curiosity, which found nothing to do but to think. The questions which would naturally form the materials of such philosophers are candidly and almost ludicrously stated by Kant[1]:

"Utrum mundus initium habeat, et terminum quempiam extensionis in spatio; utrum uspiam, et fortasse in memetipso cogitante individua quædam unitas sit, atque incorruptibilis, an nihil sit, nisi dividuum et caducum; utrum in actionibus liber sim, an quemadmodum naturæ cæteræ, ad filum naturæ ducar fatique; utrum denique suprema mundi causa exstet, an res naturales, earumque ordo in re objectâ ultimâ versentur, in quâ in omnibus deliberationibus nostris consistendum nobis sit, quæs-

[1] Artis Element. pt. 2, lib. ii. c. 2.

tiones sunt illæ quidem, cum quarum solutione universa scientiam suam mathematicus libenter commutaret; quippe quæ ratione summorum gravissimorumque finium generi humano propositorum, nil quidquam potest aperire in quo acquiescat."

One might have thought that this was but a poor and barren field for a mighty genius to expatiate in —that but one answer could be found to these problems; and one very simple and brief, within our own consciousness, or our own ignorance—that life, which is short to learn in, is very long to feel in, and an absolute eternity to act in— and that in the miseries of life, and the agonies of death, what we may feel and what we ought to do, are the high and awful questions, the "summi gravissimique fines" proposed to the curiosity of mankind. Even the heathen Persius could tell us better the end of man's philosophy :—

"Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur? ordo
Quis datus? et metæ mollis quis flexus, et unde?
Quis modus argento? quid fas optare? quid asper
Utile nummus habet? Patriæ charisque propinquis
Quantum elargiri debes? Quem te Deus esse
Jussit, et humanâ quâ parte locatus es in re."

Pers. Satir.

And Plato thought so likewise; and to these abstract speculatists themselves, and to others who have ranked him with them, the Ritters, and Schleiermachers, and Cousins, and Degerandos, who, valuable as their commentaries are, seem all to have fallen into this error, he would answer in the words of Augustin :—

"Quo pacto anima tua, tam docta et ingeniosa (ubi te multum dolemus) per hæc mysteria doctrinæ ad Deum suum, id est a quo facta est, non cum quo facta est, nec cujus portio, sed cujus conditio, nec qui est omnium

ánima, sed qui fecit omnem animam, quo solo illustrante fit anima beata, si ejus gratiæ non sit ingrata, hoc modo potest pervenire [1] ?"

We shall never understand the value of Plato's philosophy, and still less the arrangement and dependence of its parts, without viewing it in this light, as a practical, not a speculative system. Even considered as a revival of the modified doctrine of Pythagoras, which probably is the true point of view, it is still practical. Pythagoras was full of other thoughts than the abstract relations of numbers, when he organized his wonderful society to restore something of right government and religious subordination in the republics of Magna Græcia. He was as far from dreaming away his reason in empty metaphysics, though high and abstract truth was a necessary condition of his system, as Loyola was from resting in the subtleties of scholastic theology, when he created his singular polity for upholding the Romanist faith [2].

Plato's great object was man. He lived with man, felt as a man, held intercourse with kings, interested himself deeply in the political revolutions of Sicily, was the pupil of one whose boast it was to have brought down philosophy from heaven to earth, that it might raise man up from earth to heaven; and, above all, he was a witness and an actor in the midst of that ferment of humanity exhibited in the democracy of Athens. When states are at peace, and property secure, and the wheels of common life move on regularly and quietly upon their fixed lines, men with active minds may sit and speculate upon the stars, or

[1] De Civit. Dei, lib. vii.

[2] See Meisner, Histoire de l'Origine des Sciences dans la Grèce, for an interesting view of the school of Pythagoras, and one which gives a useful introduction to the school of Plato.

analyze ideas. But it is not so in the great convulsions of society. The object constantly before the eyes of Plato was the incorporated spirit, the μέγα θρέμμα[1] of human lawlessness. He saw it indeed in an exhausted state, its power passed away, its splendour torn off, and all the sores and ulcers[2] which former demagogues had pampered and concealed, now laid bare and beyond cure. But it was still a spectacle to absorb the mind of every good and thoughtful man. The state of the Athenian democracy is the real clue to the philosophy of Plato. It would be proved, if by nothing else, by one little touch in the republic. The republic is the summary of his whole system, and the keystones of all the other dialogues are uniformly let into it. But the object of the Republic is to exhibit the misery of man let loose from law, and to throw out a general plan for making him subject to law, and thus to perfect his nature. This is exhibited on a large scale in the person of a State; and in the masterly historical sketch which in the 8th and 9th books he draws of the changes of society, having painted in the minutest detail the form of a licentious democracy, he fixes it by the slightest allusion (it was perhaps all that he could hazard) on the existing state of Athens; and then passes on to a frightful prophecy of that tyranny which would inevitably follow. All the other dialogues bring us to the Republic, and the Republic brings us to this as its end and aim.

[1] Repub. lib. vi. p. 219. [2] Gorgias, p. 109.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER the preceding view every part of Plato's system will fall naturally into place. Even questions apparently farthest from any practical intention are thus connected with his plan. If in the Sophist he indulges in the most subtle analysis of our notion of being, it is to overthrow the fundamental fallacy of that metaphysical school which was denying all virtue by confounding all truth, and thus poisoning human nature at its source, and justifying the grossest crimes both of the State, and of its leaders [1]. If he returns again and again to his noble theory of Ideas, it is to fix certain immutable distinctions of right and wrong, good and evil; and to raise up the mind to the contemplation of a Being of perfect goodness, prior in existence, superior in power, unamenable, in his independence, to those fancies and passions of mankind, which had become, before the eyes of Plato, in individuals, unbridled lusts, and in the State, an insanity of tyranny. If in the Parmenides he takes us into the abstrusest mysteries of metaphysics, the nature of unity and number—this also was rendered necessary, not only to obviate objections to his own theory of ideas, but to fix the great doctrine of unity in a Divine Being—unity in goodness—one truth in action and thought,—as opposed to that polytheism of reason which makes every man's conscience his god. It grappled also with a mystery, which meets us at the foundation of every deep theory, and in the forms of every popular belief, in Christianity as well as in

[1] Gorgias, 1.

heathenism; a mystery, which, true in itself as wholly distinct from man, has yet a corresponding mystery in the constitution of the human mind—and which compelled even the heathen philosopher to state the same seeming paradox for the very foundation of his system, which Christianity lays down at once as its grand and all comprehensive doctrine. All unity implies plurality—all plurality must end in unity. So also the inquiry in the Theætetus into the nature of science bore no resemblance whatever in its object to any mere speculative theories of Kant or his followers. It was a necessary part of that system which was to become the antagonist of the Sophists, and to contend for the preservation of truth against a ruinous sensualism and empiricism, which was sapping all the foundations of society. Even the seemingly frivolous and often wearisome subtleties which occur in the Sophist, the Euthydemus, and the Politicus, are intended as dialectical exercises for the pupil whom Plato is forming to become the saviour and guardian of a state. Even the philological absurdities of the Cratylus are to be explained in the same way. He perpetually suggests this fact in the dialogues themselves. And in the Republic[1] he gives at length the principles on which these seeming anomalies are introduced.

Very much of the plan of his dialogues, for reasons which he himself supplies, and which it will occur to mention hereafter, is purposely left in obscurity. And the test of the statement here made must lie in a careful reference to the works themselves. But it is impossible to believe that Plato, the "first of philosophers," who made practical goodness and duty the one great end of life, whose whole history, as well as his theories, is full, not of speculative fancies,

[1] Book vii.

but of views of practical improvement to society[1],—the friend of Dion, the adviser of Dionysius, the pupil of Socrates, the writer of the Republic and the Laws, who recognized indeed intellect and truth as necessary conditions of man's perfection, but made "the good and the beautiful," his heart and his affections, the main-spring of his actions—who never looked down upon minds beneath him without thinking of the task of education; and never raised his eyes to that image of the Deity, which he had formed from all imaginable perfection, without seeing in it, not merely an abstraction of intellect, unity, identity, eternity, but goodness and love, and justice—the[2] Maker of the world, because he delighted in the happiness of his creatures; the Dispenser of rewards beyond the[3] grave[4]; the Cause of all good things—the Father and King of all;—it is impossible to believe that such a man, with strong affections, consummate devotion to his end, absolute unity of purpose inculcated in all his doctrines, and exhibited in the outlines of his works, should have stood before any scene of humanity, least of all before the spectacle of an Athenian democracy, without having his whole soul possessed by man and the relations of man, instead of things and the relations of things—that he should have wasted those powers, so elevated and so pure, in idle subtleties—that he should have thrown out his fancies in fragments, as one whose life was aimless—or that wrought as they are in every line with a consummate art, linked together to the observant eye by ten thousand of the finest reticulations, they were not intended as a system; and as a system will come out to us when the focus is rightly adjusted, and the whole is regarded as a mighty effort to elevate man to his per-

[1] Conviv. p. 260.
[2] Timæus.
[3] Phæd.
[4] Republic, b. x.

fection, and his perfection where only it can be reached in a social and political form.

I am most anxious to fix attention on this point, (let it be a fancy—take it as hypothesis, only try it,) because wherever it has been lost (and the commentator cannot be named who has distinctly found it) the whole of Plato's works have been viewed in inextricable confusion. Even Schleiermacher has failed in his clue. Men seem to have wandered about as in a maze—here admiring, there perplexed—there completely at a stand. No order—no limits—no end. Fragments have been dealt with as wholes, and wholes as fragments; irony mistaken for earnestness, and earnestness for irony; play for the fancy gravely dealt with as meditation for the reason; and exercises for boys treated as the serious occupation of men. Spurious pieces have been admitted, which destroyed all consistency of thought. Doubts raised to remove error or rouse curiosity have been carried off as final decisions, until Plato, the very dogmatist of philosophy, has been made the ringleader of Pyrrhonists and Sceptics. And even the holiest and purest of ethics, which never stopped short of its object till man's mind was withdrawn from[1] sense, and his heart was fixed upon its God, has been calumniated and perverted.

But take this central position—look as a philosopher on man, and on man in his whole personality, as a living immortal soul, instinct with affections and feelings, which cannot rest except in beings like himself. See him vainly struggling to realize that noble creation, for which he was formed at first, and to raise up a polity or church in the faculties of his own nature, and from the members of civil society—then contemplate the wreck of such a plan in the contami-

[1] Phæd.

nated youth and remorseless tyranny of the Athenian commonwealth—all that was noble in its nature, its "lion heart" and "human reason[1]," "starved, emaciated, and degraded;" and the "many-headed monster of its passions," πολυκέφαλον θρέμμα, "howling round and tearing it to pieces"—and then a new light will fall upon the meaning and order of those works, which were intended to do all that mere philosophy could do—to raise a solemn protest against the sins which it witnessed; to overthrow the sophistries which pandered to those corruptions; to open a nobler scene; and to create some yearning for its attainment in those few untainted minds, which nature had prepared for its enjoyment.

In this view all will be clear—the grand close of all the dialogues in the Republic and Laws; the striking mode in which all the rest are worked into these two; the commencement of them in the Phædrus, and the perfect consistency of that piece, in any other view so wild and heterogeneous; the deep melancholy tone which pervades every allusion of Plato to the scenes before his eyes; the anticipation of coming evil; the sort of prophetic elevation as he opens his "dream" of that city, wherein all goodness should dwell—"whether[2] such has ever existed in the infinity of days gone by, or even now exists in some regions of the East far from our sight and knowledge, or will be perchance hereafter"—but "which[3], though it be not on earth, must have a pattern of it laid up in heaven, for him who wishes to behold it, and beholding resolves to dwell there."

So also we shall enter into the educational character of his works; their high practical morality, the mode in which every question is carried up into the

[1] Repub. b. ix. p. 345. [2] Ib. b. vi. p. 228.
[3] Ib. b. ix. p. 349.

nature of truth, and through truth is connected with virtue—the position which theology occupies, and the practical mode in which it is applied; the absence of those abstract metaphysical speculations on the nature of the Deity, into which human reason always falls when it analyzes mental conceptions beyond what practical duty requires; and into which the Neo-Platonicians did fall, and still more the Gnostics, while they boasted of their own ingenuity, and ridiculed Plato as one, who had not, like them, penetrated "into the depths of the Intelligible Essence [1]."

Even the form of Plato's works will derive new light and beauty from considering them as instruments of instruction, not vehicles for speculation. The mode in which curiosity is roused by the fractured lines of the dialogue; the arresting the attention by demanding an answer to every position; the gradual opening of difficulties; the carrying of the eye and imagination to the truth by portions of broken winding-stairs of argument, leading to dark recesses, and ruinously hung together in masses, rather than the throwing open before the reader an easy ascending plane, which requires no labour, and stimulates no thought. So also the successive overthrow of opinions—the sudden starting up of doubts in apparently the most open ground—the skill with which the drama of the argument is broken up into scenes and acts, heightened by a stage decoration, and relieved with the solemn or the grotesque—the rich melodramatic myths which so often close them—the character of Socrates himself embodying the attributes and duties of the Greek chorus—the selection of the parties among the young—the tests which are applied to ascertain if they possess the qualities of mind, which, in the Republic [2], are declared to be necessary

[1] Porph. Vit. Plat. c. 14.

[2] Book vii.

for those who are to make any progress in goodness—— the gradual development of the system in exact proportion to the industry and ingenuity of the hearer—— and the order of the sceptical dialogues, all more or less destructive of errors without any declaration of the truth, and forming series of enigmas, to lead like an avenue of sphinxes to the grand open portal of the Republic—all these and many other points will assume a wholly different character, whether we consider Plato's work as intended to declare his opinions, or as constructed for the purpose of extricating, by a tried and thoughtful process, the minds which it was still possible to save from the follies and sins and miseries, in which the madness of the age and a vicious system of education were plunging them.

CHAPTER V.

All this to persons who never read Plato, or read him carelessly and contemptuously, as men in this day do read whatever they do not understand, at the first glimpse will appear exaggerated and enthusiastic. And no answer can be given but a demand that the trial should be made—and the hypothesis taken as a clue. If it is false, it will fail. But none whom wise men would wish to follow have ever approached the name of Plato without reverence and gratitude. All have been impressed especially with his exquisite skill as an artist or constructor of his works [1]; and none have drawn a plan which gives harmony and symmetry to them all. Some plan however must exist. If we want to form a judgment on the grandeur of some vast cathedral, we do not plant ourselves in a nook, before some disproportioned arch, or out of sight of the central aisle. We seek for that point of view, in which the builder himself beheld it before he commenced the work, and then the whole fabric comes out. And the illustration will bear to be dwelt on. Whoever studies Plato is treading on holy ground. So heathens always felt it. So even Christianity confessed [2]. And we may stand among his venerable works as in a vast and consecrated fabric—vistas and aisles of thoughts opening on every side—high thoughts that raise the mind to

[1] Schleiermacher, Introd. Preface.

[2] Clem. Alex. l. i. p. 39, 316; Theodoret, Græc. Aff. lib. i. et passim.

heaven—pillars, and niches, and cells within cells mixing in seeming confusion, and a veil of tracery, and foliage, and grotesque imagery thrown over all, but all rich with a light streaming "through dim religious forms"—all leading up to God—all blest with an effluence from Him, though an effluence dimmed and half-lost in the contaminated reason of man.

The early Church never looked on the pure and elevated truths scattered through the Grecian philosophy, and especially in the works of Plato, without recognizing in them an emanation, more or less direct, from the "Fountain of all wisdom."

"If they argue," says Clement, "it was by accident the Greeks gave utterance to portions of true philosophy, that accident was the work of a divine economy; for, with all their rivalship against us, no one will make accident a god. If by some strange coincidence, the coincidence itself is providential. If they assert that the Greeks possessed a natural intuition of truth, we know but one author of nature, even God; as we know but one author of righteousness, and yet speak of a natural righteousness as distinct from the righteousness by Christ. If that they shared in one common intellect, who is the father of this? If they speak of supernatural enunciations, these are but forms of prophecy. Others declare that those philosophers saw indeed truth, but only in reflections and shadows. Is it the less true for this? What does the divine Apostle say of ourselves? 'For now we see through a glass darkly.' And so they among the Greeks, who attained to the truths of philosophy, saw the Divine Nature, though only in far shadows and reflections; and yet such shadows and reflections, which are all that we are now capable of perceiving, partake nevertheless of truth, as reflections which are formed in water."—*Clement. Alexand. Strom.* b. i. p. 316.

This is the substance of one of the most condensed views on the relation of heathen philosophy to revealed truth which occurs in the early fathers.

A still more eloquent passage is found in Theodoret, and though long, it is worth transcribing. Any thing which can bring us to the study of such a writer as Plato with a sober reverential feeling, divested of that flippancy and conceit which must distort all our notions, and render our minds inaccessible to any sound elevated doctrines, is well worth a little delay. And the passages are not the less valuable because, with the respect which they profess, they carry also the antidote to any exaggerated submission to an authority other than the Church.

"Go then," says Theodoret, "to the Greeks, go to your own philosophers, who initiate you before we do; and who teach what we would teach you. For they are like to those birds of song which imitate the voice of man, but know not the meaning of the words they utter. Even so these reason indeed of the things belonging unto God, though they know little of the truths whereof they speak. And yet they are not without excuse. They enjoyed no succession of prophets, passing the torch of truth from hand to hand; no apostolic illumination to be a light to their feet and a lantern to their paths. Nature alone was their teacher, though her handwriting, engraven on the heart by the finger of God, the wanderings of a sinful life long since obliterated. And yet some remains of this, He, who first stamped it on their souls, renewed at times, and allowed it not wholly to perish, by displaying to mankind, through his works, his providence and power. And thus the Apostle has shown in his sermon at Lystra, where, in addition to much else, he says, 'Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.'

"The seed of Abraham," he proceeds, "received the oracles of God, and enjoyed the grace of the teaching of his prophets. The other nations, through the works of nature and the creation, were led to a knowledge of their

God by Him who is Lord of all things. And as in his wonderful bounty He sends his rain, chiefly indeed on the cultivated soil, and that for the service of man, and yet, from the abundance of his goodness, He waters even the deserts and the mountains; and the land which man has ploughed brings forth a perfect fruit, and that which he has not laboured brings forth wild fruit; and we see at times the fig-tree shooting forth upon tombs and among ruins; even so the grace of knowledge, in a more peculiar manner, is given to holy men; and yet even to others it is vouchsafed, as rain to the wilderness and forest; and hence even there fruits spring up that are fit for food, and are like to the produce of the plough. And yet it is easy to see that they have never been blessed by the culture of God's prophets, for there is a roughness mingled with them and a gall of bitterness; and they, who know how to discern between the good and the evil, gather that which is fit for use, and the rest they leave, as they who gather roses leave the thorns behind, but collect the blossoms. And such also is the instinct of the bees; for they settle not only on the sweet but on the bitter flowers, and the sweetness they extract and the bitterness they eschew; and from qualities most contrary, bitter and sour, and rough and sharp, they prepare sweetest honey for man. And these we also imitate. And from those fields of your philosophy, so full of bitterness, we provide the sweet honey for your salvation. And as they that heal our bodies concoct from venomous beasts drugs that will heal their wounds, and even from the flesh of vipers can extract antidotes to disease, so we also take in hand the works of your poets, and historians, and philosophers, and rejecting some parts as noxious, and concocting others with the sound word of our doctrine, we apply the healing medicine to your souls."—*Theodoret. Græc. Affec. Curat.* lib. i.

It would be easy to collect many more passages of the same import, and others still more immediately connecting the great truths of the Platonic philosophy with an anterior revelation, and especially with the books of Moses. Justin, Clement, Eusebius,

and others, speak of it as an acknowledged fact. Aristobulus, the Jewish peripatetic, asserted the same thing. And although both Jerome and Augustin have chronologically refuted the notion that he had enjoyed direct communication with certain of the prophets, there are scattered throughout his works such singular coincidences with Scripture, not merely such as might spring up spontaneously in different minds, viewing human nature from one common point, but seemingly borrowed and transferred, as might at least easily reconcile an attentive reader to an hypothesis of the kind.

CHAPTER VI.

My object, however, at present, is to apply the suggestion, which has been thrown out as to the practical character of Plato's writings, to a more detailed examination of the writings themselves, in the conviction that no little good may be done by assisting in turning the attention of the generation now entering into life, to the largest and noblest treasure-house existing in human literature, whether of eloquence, of beauty, of elevated moral principles, of profound metaphysics, or of political wisdom. Schleiermacher has done more than any one to throw the dialogues into an intelligible order. If it is thought that he has not perfectly succeeded in obtaining the precise clue to their perplexities, something must be allowed to a prejudice in favour of a different hypothesis. No admirers of Plato can be insensible to the assistance which Schleiermacher, Ritter, Ast, Tenneman, Van Heusde, and many other foreign critics have rendered to the study of his system. But there is something in the atmosphere, which we breathe, that modifies all our views, as it colours the objects of vision. And the deep metaphysical character of the later philosophical schools of Germany seems to have given an undue bias to their mind when examining the philosophy of the Greeks. Van Heusde has some sensible remarks on the necessity of guarding against this tendency to see all things after one fashion, and to interpret the writings of others, of men often in the most opposite circumstances, as if they had always looked through our own eyes. He compares it, not infelicitously, to the

romance-writers of the middle ages, who represented Cæsar and Alexander the Great travelling the country as knight-errants.

Schleiermacher has well pointed out the utter futility of all the old attempts to arrange the dialogues in any consistent plan. The forms of trilogies and tetralogies which could not even be generally completed, and which, in the few instances of completion, brought together the most opposite subjects without even a common plot, may be rejected at once. The idea is valuable only in one point of view, as expressing strongly a conviction of the dramatic nature of the dialogues.

The classification of them by their logical character, as " dogmatic, refutative, or tentative," is indeed by no means to be despised. On the contrary, it is one of the most important clues to a full understanding of their relative position. But it is not sufficient, because it embraces only the form of the works without touching on the matter. And although in Plato's system the two are inseparably connected, almost as body and mind, the matter must occupy by far the most prominent place. It must supply the basis of the arrangement.

The attempt to form a chronological series is still more vain. We have no external testimony to guide us, except in one or two cases. Internal evidence there is none, for the narrative is full of anachronisms so glaring as to be evidently intentional; and the conjectures which may be drawn from an altered tone of sentiment or style must be open to all the vagueness of the rashest criticism. How little any such judgment can be trusted may be gathered from the extreme difficulty of distinguishing between the spurious and the genuine dialogues, and also from the glaring mistakes which have occurred in them already, from a misunderstanding

of the object of the several parts. Even if we knew the dates of the publication of each dialogue, it would assist us but little in fixing the order in which they should be read; for any writer with a system ready formed in his mind will throw it out portion by portion, according as the train of thought may happen to present itself. Such a work is not like the erection of a house, in which the foundation must in time precede the walls, and the walls be raised before the roof. It is rather like the planting an estate; and where we begin, and where we end, may depend on the accident of the moment, without any departure from the origin l plan.

The artist-like development of the philosophical system is the principle in which Schleiermacher, with great skill and insight into the character of the Platonic writings, has proposed to arrange them; and this consideration must have weight in every attempt of the kind. The main outlines of such a plan must coincide with that which would be formed in more direct reference to the practical object of Plato. Still I think that the connection will be more easy, and the series more natural, and, in particular, (that which constitutes the great difficulty,) the parts of each several dialogue will arrange themselves in greater consistency by bearing in mind throughout that the young men of Athens were the persons to whom they were expressly addressed; that the purification of their morals—the refutation of their corruptors, the Sophists—the elevation of the standard of private and political morality—the laying a firm foundation for a new national character—the cleansing, or endeavouring to cleanse, the Augean stable of the Grecian democracy—and the opening a new world of thought and feeling, as yet hidden behind the veil of a gross sensualistic polytheism,—that these, and not merely the foundation of a meta-

physical school, or the development and propagation of barren truth, were constantly before the mind of Plato, guiding his thought and his pen throughout, and offering the only explanation to those innumerable mysteries and anomalies which meet us in every page of his works—which have made many men abandon them in despair, some play with them as a complicated enigma, others ridicule them as an unintelligible chaos, a whole succession of philosophical schools claim him as the champion of their scepticism, and even Cicero himself declare that "Plato never hazards an assertion, but argues on both sides of the question, and then leaves the reader in his doubt."

"La morale en un mot est répandue comme un parfum exquis, dans toute l'atmosphère des notions, que Platon a embrassées; on la respire incessamment alors même qu'on croit étudier seulement les principes qu'il impose aux sciences, ou les règles qu'il donne aux arts." —*Dejerand's Hist. de Systèmes,* vol. ii. p. 258.

It is this view also of the subject which places Plato in such direct contrast to Aristotle, especially in their ethical treatises. Aristotle expressly declares that he writes not for the young but for the old[1]. Plato's argument is chiefly carried on in the form of conversation with youth. Hence Aristotle's reasoning is synthetic, commencing with principles too high for undisciplined minds to understand. Plato's is wholly analytic, grappling at once with prejudices and follies, and purifying truth from error, by sifting it and bringing it to the light. The form of Aristotle is grave, simple, and such as would become a philosopher addressing philosophers. Plato is full of every art to captivate the fancy, winning, dramatic, eloquent, full of digression, now relieving the mind

[1] Nicom. Eth. b. i. c. 3.

by the most playful humour, now rising into solemnity and poetry; always striking, always impressed with the necessity of condescending to an unformed hearer.

There cannot be a more striking instance of these characteristics, nor a more complete argument in proof of the hypothesis suggested, than the first dialogue, with which, by common consent, the series must open—the Phædrus. Historically we know from Diogenes, that this was the first in order of publication. Internally it contains the germ of all the others. And there is no part of the Platonic philosophy, of which the seed may not be found carefully introduced into this singular, and, at first sight, perplexing composition. The early publication has been also inferred from the poetical and overcharged style of several portions of it; but, as in many other instances, the commentator (Dionysius) has entirely mistaken an intentional caricature for a serious and elaborate production. Even Schleiermacher seems to have fallen into the same error. The conclusion is just, that the Phædrus is the first of the dialogues; the premises are false, that the date is betrayed by a juvenile extravagance of style. Such an extravagance undoubtedly exists; but when the object of the dialogue is examined on the principle, which it is proposed to employ, it will be found perfectly consistent with the utmost severity of thought. From the Phædrus all the other dialogues run out through a series of sceptical unconclusive disputations, to four great works of an entirely different character, grave, massive, dogmatic, and final—the Republic, the Laws, the Timæus, and the unfinished fragment of the Critias. These four form one grand group openly connected together. And there is not a question left unsettled in any one of the former dialogues, which does not find its solution here—a solution unmixed

with a particle of doubt; thrown off frequently in a single sentence, without condescending, as it were, to inquire if any doubt ever had existed; at other times carrying back the mind by some little touch, which only an attentive reader would observe, to former unfinished discussions on the same subject, and by completing them, developing the whole, just as in some well-planned illumination, a dark and shapeless building will run into a blaze of light at the touch of a single torch.

In selecting the Phædrus as the point from which the reader of Plato may commence, and so work his way to the Republic, it must not be forgotten that there is another course, in which we begin with the Republic, and end with the Phædrus. It is the peculiarity of all analytical reasoning, that it admits of this double process, like reptiles that can advance with their tails just as well as with their heads. In synthetical reasoning, as for instance in Aristotle, we commence with a certainty, and follow on to a certainty. In analytical, we commence with a doubt, and so try our way to a certainty. In the one case we go by a known road from a place, which we know to be York, to London, which we never yet saw; in the other, we start from York, and go off on a journey to discover by the places, to which we arrive at last, whether the place from which we started was York or Dublin. In the one case we know we are on a continent, and journey on steadily and quietly till we choose to stop. In the other, we want to know whether we are in an island or not, and we strike out in all directions till we meet the sea in every part. Analytical reasoning, therefore, necessarily presumes a return to the principles from which we started, and which were, in fact, assumed merely as hypotheses and questions. If they are true, it is felt they will lead to such and such results, and if the results appear,

the premises are held to be true. And of falsehood the same.

It is evident, also, that when the journey has once been made, we may easily return upon our steps by ourselves, and make it a second time, with far more leisure to examine the scenery, and note down the direction-posts. Whereas the first time that we issue out on speculation, we shall require some guide to assist us, or be compelled at every step to ask where we are going. In synthetical reasoning this is not necessary, and the whole process may be performed alone. Without stopping to do more than suggest the important difference thus established between the two plans of teaching, with respect to the encouragement of a docile and trustful, or of a presumptuous rationalistic spirit—effects very strongly marked on the two schools of Plato and Aristotle—it may now be seen why there are wholly different modes of reading Plato, according as we are provided with an external clue to his meaning, or not. A young man who takes up Plato, without the slightest conception of the general scope and plan of his works, and without assistance from without, must begin with his dogmatic works. Tenneman proposes the Republic, and he is perfectly right; only it must be accompanied by the Laws, the Timæus, and the Critias. He will then see clearly the general principles which are to be developed gradually in the preparatory dialogues, and they will serve, not indeed as a perfect clue, but as a guiding point, like a distant spire to a traveller bewildered in a forest. He will be able to watch, in those dialogues, their development with interest, and to join his own exertions in unravelling the plot of an argument, when he knows something of the coming catastrophe. But even with such assistance, the task will be difficult, and often tedious; and requires far more attention and power of mind than can

be commonly expected. The most obvious mode of facilitating the study of Plato, is, therefore, to supply the student, from an external quarter, with a general outline of the principles intended to be established; to tell him, in fact, where he is going, and then to accompany him in the journey, commencing with the Phædrus and the other sceptical dialogues, and gradually bringing him to the clear and expansive prospect which opens in the Republic. In this way his mind will be placed in the position contemplated throughout by Plato himself. He will work out truth in a great degree by his own energies, evolve right conclusions from the mixed truth and falsehood of his own original notions, and borrow only so much aid from his teacher as is required to bring to light the original conceptions of his own nature[1]. To do this thoroughly, we require, first, a clear intelligible outline of the Platonic philosophy, which every young man may understand; then distinct introductions to each of the dialogues, pointing out the course of the reasonings, and fixing attention on the thousand minute delicacies and incidental hints, which give shape and animation to the whole. Something of this kind, but, it must be confessed, very briefly and imperfectly, has been attempted by most commentators. Cousin's are short headings, where the subject is treated in a bold, off-hand, sketchy French style, too pleasing to be very deep, or to create much confidence in the writer. Schleiermacher's are profoundly obscure; and not sufficiently detailed to initiate the student into the whole art and beautiful coherence of the several structures. And until some person thoroughly inspired with the soul of Plato, viewing things with his eyes, and devoting his whole mind to that one object, shall have examined the minutest point

[1] Theætetus.

with the same confidence in their use and design, with which an anatomist regards some newly discovered fibre, or apparently superfluous vein—and has thus mastered and can explain the whole arrangement—we shall still encounter infinite perplexities, and the study of Plato will continue what it always hitherto has been, and what Plato perhaps mainly intended it to be, a mystery to exercise thought, and to elicit sparks of right feeling from the reader, rather than a channel for pouring into his mind a whole train of ready-made speculations.

Far as we are at present from possessing, even in the profoundest critics of Germany, any such guide to his works, any resuscitated Socrates, we may evidently obtain more insight into their true nature than any former age of philosophy; and the reason is, that we are ourselves living in a period corresponding, most remarkably, with the times for which Plato wrote. We are beginning to feel his wants, to be perplexed with his difficulties, to witness the evils and enormities with which he was surrounded; and these are the best interpretations of the course which his thoughts took. They throw light upon the workings of his mind, as the facts foretold in a prophecy best explain the prophecy itself. And this is the clue which it is proposed to employ.

CHAPTER VII.

One, therefore, of the best preparations, which may be recommended to the student, is an accurate and thoughtful examination of a class of works very different from those of Plato in their outward form, but very similar in their aim and spirit, the Comedies of Aristophanes, and especially the Clouds. Men smile when they hear the anecdote of one of the most venerable Fathers of the Church, who never went to bed without Aristophanes under his pillow. But the noble tone of morals, the elevated taste, the sound political wisdom, the boldness and acuteness of the satire, the grand object, which is seen throughout, of correcting the follies of the day, and improving the condition of his country—all these are features in Aristophanes, which, however disguised, as they intentionally are, by coarseness and buffoonery, entitle him to the highest respect from every reader of antiquity. He condescended, indeed, to play the part of jester to the Athenian tyrant. But his jests were the vehicles for telling to them the soundest truths. They were never without a far higher aim than to raise a momentary laugh. He was no farce writer, but a deep philosophical politician; grieved and ashamed at the condition of his country, and through the stage, the favourite amusement of Athenians, aiding to carry on the one great common work, which Plato proposed in his dialogues, and in which all the better and nobler spirits of the time seem to have concurred as by a confederacy—the reformation of an atrocious democracy. There is as much system in

the comedies of Aristophanes as in the dialogues of Plato. Every part of a vitiated public mind is exposed in its turn. Its demagogues in the Knights, its courts of justice in the Wasps, its foreign policy in the Acharnians, its tyranny over the allies in the Birds, the state of female society in the Lysistrate and the Ecclesiazusæ, and its corrupt poetical taste in the Frogs. No one play is without its definite object: and the state of national education, as the greatest cause of all, is laid open in the Clouds. Whatever light is thrown, by that admirable play, upon the character of Socrates, and the position which he occupies in the Platonic Dialogues—a point, it may be remarked, on which the greatest mistakes are daily made —it is chiefly valuable as exhibiting, in a short but very complete analysis, and by a number of fine Rembrandt-like strokes, not any of which must be overlooked, all the features of that frightful school of sophistry, which at that time was engaged systematically in corrupting the Athenian youth, and against which the whole battery of Plato was pointedly directed.

The existence of such a school is no longer, in this age, a matter of history. It is rising up again among ourselves, and though it has not yet attained its full deformity, no wise man will venture to say to what lengths it may finally proceed, unless we are warned in time.

It originated, like all other corruptions of human reason, in two distinct sources. It had two parents, one an error of the head, and the other a perversion of the heart. Neither of these by itself will ever propagate a very extensive mischief; for dry speculations will not spread without some passion to inflame them; and passion by itself, unless apparently countenanced by reason, will appear too gross to be imitated or avowed. It is the same in our daily vices;

and an evil wish never starts on its career of action till it is propped on some sophistical excuse.

It is to be observed also, that in the formation of all such schools, the error and the vice (vice, that is, in the language of the world) generally exist in distinct parties. The leaders are often so-called moral men. The followers only are thoroughly depraved. Of Protagoras, for instance, Plato always speaks with some degree of respect; Epicurus was by no means a profligate; Hobbes was a man of decent regularity of life; Locke was never accused of any of those crimes to which his theories led in the French revolution; Paley, with one exception, does not seem to have been palpably corrupted by his miserable doctrines of expediency; and it has not been heard that either Bentham or Mill ever fell into the hands of the police. The fact is well worth attention. It may guard us against tolerating errors, because they are not yet ripened into crimes. And it is a proof of the homage paid to virtue, that the absence of glaring vice is necessary for all exercise of authority.

The head of this sophistical monster was thus formed of minds cool, penetrating, and commanding, provided with a fair array of various accomplishments, and aided by a persuasive eloquence. The intellectual error raised as the standard of the party, was *the uncertainty of knowledge*. But it branched out into a multitude of others, which may easily be anticipated; and far from being primary itself, it was a consequence of a whole train of falsehoods, lying hid in a disordered imagination. Its conclusions are easily deduced. And we have only to take up a newspaper, or look over a debate in parliament, to find abundant illustration of the practical logic, which forced this metaphysical principle through all the veins and channels of Athenian life, private or public. The argument ran thus: if there is no certainty in

the individual, there is to him no truth,—if no truth, no falsehood,—if neither truth nor falsehood, neither also is there right or wrong, which are but intellectual perceptions of agreement or disagreement with some fixed standard of law. Therefore there is no law external to our own feelings. Our own feelings imperatively bid us pursue pleasure and avoid pain. Pleasure and pain, therefore, are the only rule of moral action, and the criterion of goodness.

It was here that the deep current of abstract thought burst out at once into day in a marvellously intelligible form. It was like some apt musician passing from the dead dull labyrinths of scientific discords to an old familiar strain; and no sooner was it caught by all the unclean beasts of human kind, that lay battening in a stupid sensuality, than, to use the illustration of Plato, they pricked up their ears [1], flourished their tails, and pranced off, over land and sea, after the metaphysical Orpheus, until he led them to the darling abode of intellect and vice, the democracy of Athens.

Never was a field so well prepared for the reception of such a crew. On the one hand, a rising generation, full of genius, passion, and imagination—in their infancy brought up in a harem amidst women with no pretensions to the dignity of wives or mothers [2]—in their boyhood managed by slaves, and left destitute of any instruction but a little music, a little grammar, and the exercises of the gymnasium [3]—and in their youth let loose into the forum to listen to the profligate lessons of the demagogues of the day, and to have all truth and conscience obliterated from their minds

[1] Protagoras.

[2] See the Lysistrate and Eccles. passim; and compare them with the account given by Dr. Clarke of the interior of a Turkish seraglio.

[3] Alcibiades, Theages, Amatores.

amidst the whirl of a daily revolution. Living, as we do at this day, with security for the permanence of moral principles in the permanence of the Church, and amidst at least the forms of old established laws, we can scarcely realize to ourselves the frightful vortex of things and opinions which involved the young men of Athens. The council ruled by the will of a mob, the assembly swayed by every breath of passion, as the revengeful or the ludicrous prevailed—its orators boldly casting off every restraint upon human will, and not a voice that dared to wrestle with the popular frenzy, except by appealing to their interest—the courts of justice loosed from the restrictions of statutes, and banishing or pardoning, fining, and poisoning, at the whim of the moment—no private property safe for a day from the extortions of the public—sycophants and informers on all sides ready to [1] seize on the most innocent, unless bribed to give them a respite—the favourite of the day becoming the exile of to-morrow—men rising suddenly from the dregs of the people to the lordship of the Athenian empire—generals who were sent out to protect allies, returning enriched with their plunder—the population of whole cities swept away by the hand of the public executioner, or removed bodily from place to place;—now a war to devastate their borders, and brought into their very homes by the jealousy and hostility of their slaves—then a pestilence bursting from heaven on all alike, and confounding all sentiment of religion, by its indiscriminate destruction—then a political convulsion, ejecting a whole class of the population, or ripe with assassination, and massacre, and pillage; and in the midst of this frightful tumult, sufficient to bewilder and confound the strongest mind, no voice from laws, or teachers, or parents, or priests, to speak of a test of truth, or rule of conscience, or order of nature, on

[1] See a passage from the Tychon of Antiphanes, Athenæus, lib. iii. 62.

which their heart might rest, and find something like a shelter from the whirlwind [1]. Even religion aided the corruption, and scarcely a crime could be named which did not find its sanction in the theology of Hesiod or Homer [2].

"Think," says Plato, in a long and noble passage in the 6th book of the Republic, p. 219,—"Think of the many causes of destruction, that now await even those few gifted minds, which nature so rarely produces. Think not of sophists by profession, who are said to corrupt and deprave them, but of a people of sophists—a whole nation gathering themselves together in assemblies, and courts, and theatres, and camps, and there clamouring out their censure or their applause till the very walls and the rocks re-echo. Think what, in such a tumult of wild and senseless tongues, a young man must feel, and ask if any discipline, any lessons of his home can resist the outcry, and save him from being deluged with the uproar, and swept away headlong down the torrent. Look at the dealing of the people with those who refuse to follow them. They confiscate, they disgrace, they put to death —and how can any reasoning resist these fearful influences? Be assured," he adds again and again, "there is not, and never has been, and never will be in the midst of such an education *a mind that can be raised to virtue—except it be more than human. Be assured, that if a single soul in the present constitution of our states be saved, and become what it should be, it must be by a miracle from God.* They hear the public voice speaking the same language with the sophists, preaching the same doctrines, calling the same things wisdom: just as if a man had a monster that he fed, and had learned its temper and its lusts, and how he might approach it safely, how stroke it down, what would tame, and what would make it furious, the sounds which it is used to utter, and those which will soothe or exasperate it; and having learned all this by living with the beast, and studying its habits, he should call it wisdom, and form it into an art, and proceed to teach it—knowing nothing of these notions or these lusts, which are noble and which are mean—which good and

[1] Repub. bk. vi. [2] Laws, p. 360.

which evil—which just and which unjust; but naming every thing after the fancies of the monster brute; what it liked calling good, and what it disliked, evil. Then turn," he proceeds, "to the very advantages which nature may have given to a high minded, favoured young man—talent, and courage, and taste, and strength, and fortune. Will not even these cause his ruin, when he sees the whole empire of Greece placed within his grasp, even the barbarians exposed to him—and his heart swells, and his fancy is puffed up; and when those who love him best would admonish him of the care of his soul, others, who scorn such a thought, spur him on in the race of ambition, and strain every nerve to drag him from the influence which would save him from destruction."

This is but a wretched abridgment of a passage which, more than any other, lays open the real state of Plato's mind. It is in the original, full of the most noble eloquence, the eloquence of deep, simple, indignant melancholy, at the spectacle of vice and ruin which lay before him in his degraded country. And it should be studied again and again, to show that the thing uppermost in his thoughts, was the condition of the young men of Athens, and a last desperate struggle to save, if it were possible, a few.

One part of the quotation has anticipated a remark of no little importance in explaining the influence which the Sophist possessed over the minds of the young. Ignorant and uninstructed as they were, they were yet placed within reach of the most tempting prizes which could stimulate covetousness or ambition. The place of popular orator was open to all, and the popular orator of a democracy is for the time its lord and master. To become a Pericles, a Cleon, or an Alcibiades, with the mob of Athens and the treasury of its allies at their command, and all the dreams of power, which Athens cherished, capable of realization for the aggrandizement of its leaders, was within the reach of every citizen. One thing

only was wanting—Oratory. There were few books, which speak to men in their more sober and thoughtful hours; no fixed laws to supersede new daily appeals to the popular will; no prescriptive authority of rank, or natural reverence for virtue; things which in other constitutions render eloquence superfluous, or counteract its mischief. Without oratory no influence could be obtained.

In this state of things the sophists made their appearance. Gorgias, with his wordy, florid, pantological tautologies, to take captive an Athenian House of Lords; Protagoras, with his political economy, and expediency morals; Hippias[1], loaded with an encyclopædia of physical science and useful knowledge; Prodicus, the Horne Tooke of Greece, with an etymological hair-splitting power of purism, at which the careless colloquialist of Athens looked on with wonder; together with Polus, and a host of other strangers who form the back-ground of the

[1] We are afraid that Hippias would have put to shame the most encyclopedistic Penny Magazine sophists of the present day.

"Tell me," says Socrates to him, "is this not the case in every science. I ask you, as an universal-knowledge man, as one who knows every art and every science, as I heard you boasting the other day in the market-place. You stated that you went to the Olympic games with every thing about you, the work of your own hand,—your ring cut by yourself, a seal engraved by yourself, a smelling bottle and oil-cruse made with your own hands. You had tanned your own shoes, woven your own shirt, spun your own cloak, and even your Persian girdle was your own embroidery. Besides this, you came loaded with poems, epic poems, and tragedies, and dithyrambics, and a whole catalogue of speeches and novels, all your own. You professed yourself also a thorough master of all other arts and professions, especially of rythm and harmonics, and orthography; and many other things beside, as I well remember. I had nearly forgotten your art of memory, the most brilliant of all your accomplishments."—*Hippias*, 324.

singular groupe which is sketched in the beginning of the Protagoras. The whole stage decoration of that dialogue is worthy of great attention. Socrates is wakened in the morning before it is light, by a young friend, who finds his way into his bed-room in breathless haste, to announce the happy news that Protagoras is arrived at Athens. They proceed both to the house of Callias, a rich and distinguished Athenian, who gave dinners to the Athenian Sophists, and where the chief of them are supposed to be lodged. On being admitted with some difficulty, after a parley with a surly porter, wearied out with the succession of visitors to the newly arrived prodigies—

"We found," says Socrates, "Protagoras walking in the vestibule. Walking with him in a line on one side were Callias and his brother, and Charmides—all of them men of the first rank: on the other Xanthippus, the son of Pericles, and Philippides, and Antimænus, one of the most promising of Protagoras's disciples, and who intended to become a professor himself. Behind and listening to all that passed were a number of others, chiefly strangers," (specimens of the herd who were mentioned before as charmed by this Orpheus of metaphysics, and following the sound of his voice from city to city). "At the sight of this band of attendants, I was delighted," says Socrates, "to observe how carefully they avoided getting into the way of Protagoras. Whenever he turned and his party, the disciples fell back and divided themselves, wheeling off to the right and left in admirable order, and scrupulously arranging themselves behind him. After Protagoras I observed Hippias of Elis, sitting in the opposite vestibule on a sort of throne, and around him about the steps were sitting Eryximachus and Andion, and a number of others, who appeared to be putting questions to Hippias on Astronomy and physical science; while he, sitting aloft on his throne, dispensed to them their several answers. Prodicus was also there in a little room, which was formerly used as a butler's pantry, but now from the influx of guests, Callius had been obliged to empty it and turn it into a bed-room. He was lying

there in bed wrapped in a quantity of sheep-skins and blankets. On sofas near sat Pausanias and Agathon, the two Adimantus', and some others. But what they were talking of I was unable to catch, notwithstanding all my anxiety to hear Prodicus—for he seems to me a man of universal knowledge, and more than human; but from the gruffness of his voice there was such a buzzing in the room that I could not distinguish what he said."

Then follows his introduction to Protagoras, and an account from Protagoras himself of the profession and character of a Sophist.

No little mistake has been caused by giving to this word itself a wrong etymological signification. It neither means, as a modern Sophist supposes, who, knowing nothing of Greek, has pronounced Aristotle and Plato to be fools—the wisest of men—still less what is denoted by the term in English, artful and illogical reasoners. The Sophists were the persons who professed *to make others wise;* they were the great instructors, the London University, the Useful Knowledge Club, the New National Education Society of Athens. Undoubtedly the office they assumed implied their own personal wisdom; and the necessity of maintaining appearances without any real stock of knowledge, coupled with the principle of pleasing without any regard to truth, seduced them into those habits of ingenious trickery, which have since been known by their name. But, as Protagoras himself states, it was as the original introducers of a wholly new scheme of education that they took their stand, made their money, and incurred, in no few instances, odium as political innovators. In this light they were regarded by Plato.

Nothing could be more tempting than the condition of the youth of Athens, for clever, conceited, ambitious men, by their own theory disencumbered of a conscience, and obliged, as by a sense of duty, to provide for their own indulgences, to undertake the task of

fitting them for those public duties of life, which in a Grecian democracy occupied the whole field of action. And rhetoric, as the main engine of political eminence, they were thoroughly capable of teaching. The habit of disputation, which sent Hippias every year [1] to the Olympic games to challenge a run upon his pantological budget, and to improvise on all possible questions, just as scholasticism in the middle ages sent scholars up and down Europe to post their themes and syllogisms at the gates of universities, had given them a thorough command, not over language alone, but over all the arts of concealing ignorance, and misleading weakness, which were necessary to a popular demagogue. Language as the instrument of power over minds—language as the imperfect medium of communicating ideas, and, therefore, the readiest means of mixing and embezzling them in the transfer—language as the art of pleasing—language as the never-failing subject for etymological ingenuity to anatomize—language, again, as the natural transcript of the human mind, and the human mind in that low vulgar form, in which alone a popular leader or an expediency-philosopher can see it, or wish to see it—language in all these lights was to the Sophists everything. It was their stock in trade—the nostrum they offered for sale, the ready unblushing witness to all their paradoxes; the forms through which these moral magnetisers manipulated their somnolent victims; the gaudy tinsel stage which was to attract to the raree show within; the hand-bill of the mountebank; and the apparatus for his thimble-rig. Hence the prominence given in so many of Plato's dialogues to the subject of language,—and especially the invariable connexion between the practical abuse of rhetoric and metaphysical discus-

[1] Hippias.

sions on the nature of pleasure and of truth. This also is the key to the Cratylus—a dialogue which, by the most singular misconception, has been searched by Greek critics for etymologies, but which is a serious extravaganza to expose the Horne-Tookism of the day, and its connexion with the metaphysics of sophistry.

The advantages held out to the teachers of this new art of politics were not few. Courted, admired, and pampered by the rich; stared at, at an awful distance, by the poor; their levees thronged with daily votaries; their names wafted from city to city; —crowds gathering round them in all places of public resort, to witness their skill in disputation, and applaud the triumph; the day filled up with the excitement of the contest, or the enjoyment of victory, and business suspended during their presence, as in England at the announcement of a sparring-match or cock-fight[1]—they yet reaped still more solid advantages from these labours in the diffusion of useful knowledge.

Unlike the great philosophers of ancient Greece, the modern sophists did not disdain to receive a compensation for their labours. They were anxious to disseminate learning, and to found for it an itinerant college, but, like their modern successors, they still were not indifferent to the dividends. "Think," says Hippias to Socrates[2], "of the sums of money which Protagoras and Prodicus collected from Greece. If you knew how much I had made myself, you would well be surprised. From one town, and that a very small one, I carried off more than 150 minæ, which I took home, and gave to my father, to the extreme astonishment of himself and my townsmen. In fact I think that I have cleared as a sophist more than any two others put together."

[1] Apply Clouds, the Two *Logics*. [2] Hippias Major, p. 78.

To this solid advantage was added no little political consideration in their respective cities. Nearly all the most eminent sophists are found as ambassadors at Athens, and in that capacity they took the opportunity of delivering their lectures. The influence also which they exerted on the people was a fresh source of power and profit. And still other opportunities there were of indulging baser passions than ambition, on which it is impossible to dwell. They lie before us indeed in hideous deformity in every page of Grecian history. But we must cover them up and pass on; only, painful as the task is, bearing them in mind, when we would understand the frightful struggle in which Plato was engaged, and no more joining in the clamour against his noble and pure mind, than we would charge with the crime of murder the finder and helper of a murdered man, because he had blood upon his clothes.

Such were some of the circumstances, under which the new system of national education was introduced into Athens. The consequences were such as might be expected. Take away truth from the mind of man, and external law from his conscience, and abandon him in the midst of temptation, and encouraged by the only persons he respects, to the opinion and passion of the hour, and we know what follows. Give then by a natural constitution extraordinary activity to his intellect, and violence to his passions, and you make a monster. And the picture drawn in the Clouds of the metamorphosis effected by a Sophist in the character of a young, high-spirited, thoughtless Athenian falls very little short of one. Instead of music, gymnastics, field-sports and religious ceremonies, his time was now occupied in captious quibbling, bad metaphysics, or bombastic rhetoric. His open-heartedness was changed into cunning—his simple affectionate feeling hardened into entire

abandonment even of filial duty, and not rarely into parricide. Human nature was degraded to a level with the brute, and a system of morals founded on the analogy of their instincts. His unreflecting reverence for the gods was laid aside for atheism, or [1] a theology which made the Divine Being himself susceptible of bribery, or an accomplice in his crimes. His obedience to the laws of his country was cast to the winds; and his country looked on only as a prize for the most crafty plotters, and society as a state of war [2], in which might was the only rule of right, and to become a tyrant the supreme happiness of man. The simple unsophisticated instincts of right and wrong were obliterated in the coarsest shamelessness. The very language of morals was confounded, till honesty was called folly, and goodnature weakness, and cunning wisdom, and he was thought wisest and best who could impose most cleverly on others, whether by word or deed, by falsehood or assassination, by solemn promises, or still more solemn perjuries [3]. Even the boon which nature showered so profusely on the Greek races, personal beauty and strength, was lost in the general ruin; and instead of the open walk, the manly figure, and countenance flushed with health and ingenuous modesty, the eye fell on every side upon paleness, emaciation, and effeminacy, and deformity, betraying the wreck of the mind within.

Those who are familiar with the comedies of Athens, its orators and its historians, will not accuse this sketch of any exaggeration. It is not a picture of what might follow, but of what had followed in the time of Plato. And upon this spectacle he was looking when he wrote his dialogues.

[1] Laws, x.

[2] See the theory well drawn out in the preface to Hobbes' de Cive.

[3] Thucydides.

CHAPTER VIII.

And let us pause for one moment to reflect on the feelings with which he must have regarded it. We must not indeed elevate the character of Plato to a level with that of Pythagoras, so far as existing records enable us to judge. He had not the boldness or decision of character to organize an extensive confederacy, and thus obtain the command of the political movements of his country. Practical as his object is, there is a want of energy about his measures—a reasoning, didactic, speculative tone of mind which would fit him for writing in the closet far better than for acting in the assembly. His indignation, strong as it is, permits him still the use of irony, and irony rarely coexists with the highest intensity of feeling. He seems to play and dally with human nature, as a timid physician trifles with palliatives, instead of crushing it in the full blossom of its sins with a hand of iron. Even the elaborate polish of his words, the art with which every stone is fitted into its proper place, indicate a thoughtfulness and design, and a thoughtfulness slightly diverted from his practical object to a speculative production, which is scarcely consistent with the vehemence of a bold energetic reformer[1].

[1] Dans Socrate on admire l'homme, le modèle du vrai sage ; dans Platon on admire l'artiste heureux, qui a voulu représenter ce modèle, quoiqu'il l'ait trop souvent altéré en prétendant l'embellir. Le sublime de l'un est dans sa vie ; celui de l'autre, dans ses travaux.—*Degerando, Hist. de Syst.* vol. ii. p. 212.

Plato lived till 80 years of age, and according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, he was engaged to the very last moment in "*combing and curling, and weaving and unweaving his writings*

His writings are not like the passionate outbursts—the rapid, vivid sparks showered off by a gigantic hand welding, blow upon blow, a red-hot mass of human corruption. If Luther, instead of popular tracts, rough, coarse, but full of fire, which kindled the populace in a moment, and engaged even the printers in a conspiracy to publish them with scrupulous accuracy, while they filled the answers of the Romanists with the absurdest blunders—if he had sat down in his closet, and left Platonic dialogues as a legacy to the world, or, like Erasmus, had written praises of folly, the Papacy, as far as he was concerned, would have been in vigour to this day. It is passion, and not intellect, which effects revolutions. And the most perfectly finished works of literature tell least at a time of excitement. They keep the light burning for future generations, but do not diffuse it at the moment.

When we add to this natural bias of Plato's mind, the catastrophe of the Pythagorean schools, the murder of Socrates, the jealous passions of the Athenian tyrant, and perhaps the hopelessness of the case, we may be prepared for that, which undoubtedly occurs in his writings, more of a lamenting, melancholy tone, more of sarcasm, contempt, and remonstrance, than of that intense indignation and energy, which we might expect from the purity of his heart. And yet his feeling cannot be mistaken. Read the sixth book of the Republic, the end of the Convivium, the Alcibiades, the Lysis, the beginning of the Theætetus,

after a variety of fashions." Κτενίζων καὶ βοστρυχίζων καὶ πάντα τρόπον ἀναπλέκων. After his death there was found a tablet, in which the few first words of the Republic were varied and arranged in a number of forms. κατέβην χθὲς εἰς Πειραῖα μετὰ Γλαύκωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος. Dionys. Halicar. Περὶ Συνθεσ. 25. p. 242. The same anecdote is related by Quintilian, Demetrius Phalereus, and Diogenes Laertius.

and especially the whole of the Phædrus, and every line is full of the deepest compassion and sympathy. Not a dialogue but young men are introduced as the persons to be taught, or corrected, or encouraged. Education is the first thought throughout, and the sophist, their deadly enemy, to be expelled from his rule over their hearts. From Socrates, lying at noon-day under the plane tree on the banks of the Ilyssus, and raising up the thoughts of the corrupted Phædrus to another world above him, to the same Socrates sitting in the dungeon, with his hand playing with the hair of Phædo, before he entered on that world himself, it is still the friend, and guide, and moral father of the young, not a mere eloquent poet or speculative philosopher, that is foremost in the pictures of Plato.

And let us learn the feelings, with which he regarded them, from himself, and not from others. Neither bad-hearted nor cold-hearted men can understand the depth, and holiness, and power, of that affection which God himself inspires in the best of hearts, for young souls placed within their reach to be reared up in goodness and truth. Their weakness, and tenderness, and blindness to the perils that surround them—their warmth of feeling unchilled as yet by the cold hand of a selfish world—the trustfulness with which they surrender themselves to the guidance of others, who know themselves to be fallible and frail—their unsuspecting earnestness, their energy and spirit, their open candour and joyousness of heart, hopes which we sigh to think are vain, and fears at whose simplicity we smile—these and many, many lineaments of a nature originally divine, not yet worn out by sin, but bearing still upon them faint gleams of a light from heaven, which fade and die away too often as they descend into the world;—even that which nature intended to be the symbol of the soul within,

the eye full of openness and joy, the brow unfurrowed with care, the cheek still alive to shame, the frame erect in manliness, and vigorous for the duties of life —all these are not placed before us by Him who formed our heart, as things to be looked on with apathy and coldness, or suffered to be crushed and trodden on, as we trample on the flower of the field. Give to such beings moreover great powers of good or evil—wealth, talent or rank, on which the fate of thousands may depend, and their own souls go down to the grave, covered, according to their deeds, with the blessings or curses of mankind; and a young man becomes to any thoughtful mind not merely an object of interest, but a spectacle of awe. Not merely the length of one life, but the eternity of many souls, is involved in the acts of his earliest days; and there is One engaging him in a game, of which he knows and can know little, with this frightful stake depending upon its issue. But add to this the thought (we use the language of Plato, not language borrowed from Christianity), that all which is beautiful in nature came from God, and is a type of God, and was seen by Him at the beginning to be good, and was showered in profusion upon earth that it might rejoice our hearts, and bind us to his works and to each other, and lead up our affections through the shades and imagery of a glorious creation to a still higher world above us, and to Him who is its Maker and King. Remember that men are not as stocks and stones, but living souls bound to each other by one common origin, engaged in one common struggle to rise up from the dungeon of this life, and the slavery of passion, into a pure and holy region, where they may see God face to face—that in this race they are companions of angels—when they fall, falling together, and when they rise, rising together—that they bring into this world together spirits written over with the

truths and hieroglyphics of a nobler state of being, and pass from it to retain beyond the grave the affections and communion cherished here. Think how these affections at our birth are wrapped up in the inmost recesses of our nature, not to be stifled and killed, but to be called out, and expanded, and consecrated each on its proper object [1]—that minds and not matter are those objects—that these affections are the springs to all noble actions, the cement of social life, the sweetener of our sorrows, the heightener of our joys, the restorer of energy, and hope even to the dying spirit—that no man ever lived as a saint who was not full of the sympathies of his nature, nor died as a hero without some one, either friend, or home, or country [2], for whom to shed his blood.—Think of our affections, in one word, as the very "wings of the soul [3]," raising us up from this dull, dead earth to Him whose name is Love. Then ask by what arm and power we have been saved ourselves from ruin, and raised to heaven, and how we can requite it but by going back and saving others from ruin likewise [4]? Remember that here upon earth, and in the heart of man, God has his image; and wherever that image is, there is an object for our love [5]; and wherever there is a human soul, there also is a being which we may form and fashion after the model of our God, and become to it its spiritual parent in all holiness, modesty, and virtue [6]. And lastly, when a yearning rises up for an existence longer than this short space, even for immortality—remember that one way only is left to obtain it upon earth; if others can be left behind us to whom we have given life, new forms be prepared to take the place of those which must soon decay, and an eternal inheritance of virtue be thus propa-

[1] Phædrus. [2] Laws. [3] Phædrus.
[4] Republic. [5] Phædrus. [6] Republic.

gated from soul to soul [1]. Bear all this in mind, and then it may be said to a young man, you may approach in innocency and elevation of heart, even to those seeming mysteries of Plato, the oft-recurring questions of human affection, which (mixed up as they are in concession, as he himself declares [2], to the necessities of the age), with much to make us tremble, are nevertheless in substance holiness and purity itself. We know how holiest things in holiest places, even in God's own word, have been profaned by man's impurity. Let us not commit the same sin on the memory of the wisest of heathens; or wantonly defile a spring from which the best of men have drunk goodness, health, and strength, and lifted up their heads for a battle with their passions, and a triumph.

And these thoughts, so like what Christianity consecrates by blending them with the most solemn of its mysteries, and the consummation of its perfection, were in Plato not mere metaphysics. They formed a necessary part of his practical system. All philosophies whatever may be divided into two heads, those which contemplate things, and those which establish relations with persons. This is the leading distinction. And Platonism, like all other sound and noble theories, was in a peculiar degree a philosophy of persons. The heart occupied its natural place in the structure of humanity. Feelings and affections were encouraged as well as ideas arranged. A spiritual world on all sides was seen behind the veil of a material world, and to this the affections passed on, and there rested in their natural objects. To have left out the theory of the affections, or not given it a most prominent place, would have belied the whole character of Plato's mind.

It was necessary for many other reasons. If men's

[1] Convivium. [2] Phædrus.

hearts were to be raised and purified, and tuned to higher energies, this could only be effected by appealing to the common sympathies of their nature. Cold, lifeless reason, could do nothing. If the corrupting influence of the sophistical school was to be met and overcome, it was necessary to rouse up an antagonist power in good and pure emotions, to take affections which nature has firmly rooted in the best of minds, and to train them on right objects, instead of permitting them to run wild, or endeavouring to extirpate them wholly. There is a beautiful sermon of Dr. Chalmers on this important law of moral education. If the evil spirit is to be driven out, do not leave its old abode empty and garnished for a time, but fill it at once with a good spirit, ready to keep and defend it. And this was never forgotten by Plato.

Once more, as an educational system, his philosophy could no more move without the spring of affectionate feeling, than a locomotive engine, with all its wheels and boilers, can start if you put out the fire. Let not men suppose, as they do suppose in the present day, that you can educate by steam; that acts of parliament, and joint stock companies, and meetings at Exeter Hall, and commissions of inquiry, and mechanics' institutes, and Lancastrian schools, and doses of useful knowledge, diluted to the meanest capacities, and patchwork of Scripture stitched together, that the child may not know whence it comes, that all this bustle of cosmopolitan dreamers, and political mountebanks can train up a single child in the way in which he should go. There must be affection—strong, natural, unconscious affection—and affection as He intended—the *one* all-comprehending Being, who has appointed for us each, in his wisdom, but *one* Father, *one* friend, *one* wife, *one* master, bound us to *one* country, sanctioned but *one* king,

permitted to us but *one* Church—as He himself has taught us, affection, concentrated in *one* object. Draw up before a child, or a young man. the whole portentous array of an educational police, teachers and subteachers, commissioners and committees, houses of parliament and convocations of preachers, and the child will turn away in terror, and run to hide itself in the bosom of its mother; and the young man will laugh in his sleeve, and go off to consult a companion no wiser than himself, if what they have told him is true. There is no certain access to the head except through the heart; and no access to the heart except through the authority of individuals. Even the Church cannot make herself visible, or secure her right place upon men's minds, except in the person of her ministers. And as nature has given to the young affections which thus look up and fix themselves on some one personification of an excellence superior to their own, so she has also provided for them, from their earliest years, a number of such objects around them; and accident, or rather Providence, for the most part, rarely a predetermined arrangement on the part of man, decides the particular point to which they are carried and adhere. You cannot arrange men, least of all young men, and drill them into processional order, and bind them together as friends, by a will of your own. Affection is spontaneous, and defies compulsion, and takes fright at interference. So that all which an extensive system of corporate education can do, is to remove out of the way all wrong objects, supply as many good as possible, leave the heart to its own natural play, and wait the result. And such were Plato's views. His great fundamental scheme, piercing through every subject and fully developed in his Republic, is a Polity for the education of man, just as the Church is a polity, so far as mere human nature is concerned,

constructed for the education of Christians[1]. It was to have laws, superintendents and teachers. But Plato no more thought of practically working his system and conveying his lessons to the heart, through his central committee of phylaces, or any subordinate functionaries, than he would have proposed to teach loyalty to a nation by garrisoning their towns, or honesty to the thieves of London by an establishment of police. By such a plan he secured stability in the maxims of education. He gave support and authority to individual influence. He regulated movements, and removed obstacles, and insured a supply of virtue, but the particular channels through which that supply was to flow, he left to the instincts of nature, and accidental combinations of society. He left it, as we must leave it, with all our parade of machinery, to the voluntary zeal, or the unintentional infection of individuals—to that moral influence of example and personal attachment, which can neither be forced by acts of parliament, nor ensured by endowments, nor remunerated by salaries, but without which the whole system of education, however orderly and beautifully branched out by its contriver, is but a dead tree, and will bear no fruit. We know how this spirit is engendered and fostered by Christianity. The very facts of Christianity supply it. But Plato had no such facts. He wished that every old man in the state might look on every young man as his child[2], but to obtain the groundwork for this feeling he was obliged to imagine (imagine only, for he never proposed to realize) a state of things, which might give to all a community of interest and life, such as the Church literally fulfils in the spiritual world. He felt, as Christianity feels, the difficulty of the problem—how with man's tend-

[1] Repub. v. 7. [2] Repub.

ency and duty absorbed in the contemplation of perfection[1]; his eye may be forced downward, and his affections be engaged in an inferior object. And he used the same arguments with Christianity, that such a task is a duty devolved on us by the will of the great Legislator of the world; that the society which reared us from our infancy demands this requital at our hand[2]; that we are to look to the good of the whole, and not allow selfish enjoyment to interfere with the general interests. But Plato knew how little such reasonings would tell, without some feeling to carry them to the heart. And therefore, like Christianity itself, he permitted particular attachments, and indulged and encouraged that universal instinct of paternal affection which, in the words of Clement[3], makes all who teach as fathers, and all who are taught as children; and never allows a good man a single superiority over others, without compelling him to use it as means of raising them to a level with himself, and of finding his own highest enjoyment in accomplishing their perfection. It was this spirit that actuated himself.

"He that speaketh to others through his writings," says Clement, in another passage (p. 273), "is bound as by a solemn oath to God, and registers this vow—not to write for lucre, not for vain glory, not to be vanquished by prejudice, not to be enslaved by fears, not to be elated by pleasure; to think of but one enjoyment, the salvation of those that read. And not even to think of sharing this at the present, but to wait patiently in hope for his reward, from him that hath promised to pay his labourers according to their hire."

[1] Repub. [2] Ibid. [3] Stromat. lib. i.

CHAPTER IX.

I HAVE been led on this point much farther than I had intended. But it is not a digression. It is absolutely necessary in a preparation for understanding the main features of Plato's philosophy, and especially for approaching the Phædrus, with which the study of the system must commence. And there are a few more preliminary remarks which it will be expedient to make first.

In the first place, returning to the statement which was made respecting the fundamental doctrine of the sophist and its logical conclusions, we may now understand the principle on which Plato arranged his plan of attack. For instance, as the conclusion must follow, if the premise be granted, he never attempted to stem the torrent of mischief anywhere but at its source. Every question of vice and virtue, politics or morals, pleasure or pain, is carried up by him at once to the original ground of dispute, the *certainty of knowledge*. It is treated, and treated most properly, as a question of science, never of mere feeling, still less of expediency. If there is a doubt as to the right or the wrong of an action, we must look for some standard of right. At the very least the discovery of such a standard must be an intellectual process. If none can be obtained, our moral principles are gone. If any can be obtained, we have only to observe it. This accounts also for the perpetual recurrence of the doctrine of ideas (ὃ θρυλλοῦμεν, Phæd.), on which his standard of morals was founded. It accounts also for the unsparing severity, with which he cut away from the human mind every thing like

fancy, poetry, mere emotion, casual opinions, sensation, and the like. These formed the empire of his adversaries. And until he could take his footing on a sure ground of truth, he was wholly unable to combat with them. Hence it is that the nature of human knowledge, of science, and of opinion, occupy so large a portion of every dialogue, not as an abstract metaphysical question, but as constituting in fact the very root of the sophistical doctrine, which he was endeavouring to eradicate. His end was not like that of other theorists, speculation, but practice. His practice involved his speculation.

This accounts also for the comparative gentleness, with which, as was observed before, he deals with the greatest delinquencies, and for which he throws out an early apology in the Phædrus[1].

When men can trace faults to errors, and excuse absurdity or vice as ignorance of truth, it is astonishing how their indignation subsides. Want of skill in dialectics is the source to which Plato refers for the follies and sins of the day. It seems at first sight folly and sin to assign any such misnomer. And Aristotle, and other moralists, who have either purposely perverted, or have misconceived the theory of Plato, make themselves very merry with the thought of thus turning crimes into mistakes. A little consideration would prevent all such thoughtless criticism; and opportunities may occur hereafter of pointing out the real relation, in which, according to the view of Plato, and to the facts of human nature, the head must stand to the heart. At present this forgiving spirit is mentioned to account for the studious adaptation of his writings to an undeveloped, or perverted, or careless condition of the intellect; for the minuteness with which he draws out every link in a chain of reasoning; for the effort to awaken and

[1] P. 60.

retain the attention; for the little indulgences of humorous and dramatic action, for at times the florid and gorgeous description, all addressed, as he distinctly says in the Phædrus, to Phædrus himself, that is, to the class of readers of which Phædrus was the type—the gifted, profligate, and corrupted youth of Athens.

Still this was not all that was required for the extirpation of the sophistical school. Their fundamental doctrine of the uncertainty of knowledge, branched out, indeed, into these corruptions; but it had also its roots—roots very deeply sunk; and it was little to lop the boughs, and leave the stock alive, to send forth a fresh succession. To cut this stock out of the ground was the main design of Plato, and perhaps no effort of the human intellect is more astonishing than this to a thoughtful mind, not frivolously ridiculing things which he does not understand, but penetrating into the real meaning of Plato, and alive to the difficulties of his position.

The origin of the sceptical theory, traced historically, is to be found in physical science; and the origin of physical science is to be found in a stage of society, when the principle of faith is abandoned for that of self-will, and men are released from the sense of a moral influence above them, embodied in human authority. It was so in the Ionian school of old, and it was so in the Baconian philosophy. Thales paved the way for Heraclitus and Pyrrho, Bacon for Hobbes and Locke, and the Sophists of the present day. And the course of human reason has run through similar channels, and fallen down the same succession of degradations in the Heathen and the Christian era.

There are but two objects on which men can exercise their reason, mind and matter, or to use a distinction made before, "*persons and things.*" So long as we fix our eyes upon minds, or persons, or spiritual

agents within and without us, so long our moral affections come naturally into play, and the moral relations of life will be maintained and obeyed. There will be no question of a law without us, for we shall recognize it in the very existence of every moral agent. For no moral agent can exist without prescribing limits to the actions of others, deserving affections, and reciprocating duties, without therefore being to us *a law*. There will be no question of a law within us, a law of conscience, because the act of self-reflection will exhibit our twofold nature, reason and goodness on the one hand, passion and vice on the other, and the two cannot be placed side by side, without our at once recognizing where lies the imperative authority. The natural superiority of virtue over vice, when virtue and vice are both before us, is as much a necessary perception, as that four are more than two. If it is not perceived, we may be sure the comparison has not been made. When we are accustomed thus to believe in, and to act up to, relations with other moral beings within our own experience, we shall be docile, and even credulous, when we are told by them of other moral beings out of sight. Religion will become part of our nature. It will be only an expansion towards God of feelings already existing towards man. Upon this moral vision, joined to the consciousness of our own infirmities, and our instinctive conception of something better than ourselves, we shall build our faith in man, and upon our faith in man we shall rest our belief in God. On this follows our belief of a future state—of rewards and punishments;—of moral responsibility; and all the other views which give definiteness to our choice of actions, and by practically influencing our conduct, do more than all the reason in the world to harden and anneal our fancies and opinions into enduring subjective realities. Fancy paints pictures on the

mind, but it is action that burns them in, and hope and fear, pleasure and pain, that kindle the fire.

In this way, wherever there is an abiding sense of spiritual and moral agents surrounding and acting upon us, there we shall find no place for moral scepticism, no ingenious cavillings about the distinctions of right and wrong; and where there is no scepticism in morals, there will be none in any thing else. You may prove to a good man, that the whole of the material creation is, according to Heraclitus, in a perpetual flux. It no more affects him than the decay of a house interests the lodger for the day; it is no part of himself. You may throw doubts upon every sense; but they are quite faithful enough to support life, and it is not with the eye or the ear that he becomes acquainted with moral realities. You may exhibit vacillations and discrepancies in the sentiments of the world; but the world is not the standard to which he appeals; he is quite beyond the reach of any such vicissitudes and convulsions. If he is weak himself, he has strength elsewhere; and as the very notion of a Deity is necessarily that of perfection, his strength cannot be impaired. Nothing can shake him, which does not shake God. From Plato to Descartes, from St. Paul to the humblest Christian, it is still but one simple act of faith. There is a God; God is goodness; goodness will take care of me[1]. And the ground, the only ground for this belief, and all its consequences, is to be found in an instinctive, a Christian will say a supernatural, power of vision, by which spiritual beings are brought under the eye of our consciousness, hidden, as they may be, behind a veil of flesh, or wholly removed from sense. Sight and obedience, obedience and certainty follow together, the moment a Power above, whether by the

[1] Timæus, Repub., Phæd.

instinct of a warm, affectionate, trustful heart, or by the quickening of a dead nature within us, bids us, as Eneas was bade,—

"Adspice, namque omnem, quæ nunc obducta tuenti
Mortales hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum
Caligat, nubem eripiam: tu ne qua parentis,
Jussa time, neu præceptis parere recusa."

And then follows the vision of Deity,—

"Apparent diræ facies, inimicaque Trojæ
Numina magna Deûm."—(*Virgil*, lib. ii.)

Now, then, reverse the case. Close up this spiritual eye, and thicken the darkness laid upon it, even in its natural state, by a course of vice or frivolity, or the absence of reflection, or conceit, or self-will, or self-indulgence, or contempt for others, or any other passion or folly by which man is shut up into himself, as in a dungeon; and if his reason is to be employed at all, it will turn naturally, at first, upon the material world. He loses sight of mind, and becomes wholly conversant with matter. The material world, we know as a fact, is but a series of changes. If by an experimental philosophy, such as the present day delights in, we reduce its movements to general laws, and so give it unity, fixedness, and eternity, and therefore a semblance of power, we shall undoubtedly run the risk of making it our God. It will possess the main qualities required by the cravings of *human reason* to satisfy its contemplation; and in the case of which we are speaking, the heart has no place, and reason is every thing. Thus Aristotle's physical science led him as naturally to the eternity of the world, and something approximating to Pantheism, as the same science before our eyes is encouraging the same absurdities, though while the Church maintains her ground, they dare not openly appear. But remove experimental

philosophy, as was the case in the Ionian school, and leave men nothing but the perpetual changes before them of outward objects, their fallible senses to watch those changes, and very imperfect metaphysics to explain their physical experiences, with about as much propriety as the price of a chaldron of coals is taken to measure the cost of a ton of hay ; put man in this position, and nothing on earth can save him from the most frightful scepticism. There is nothing uniform without—no order, no law ; nothing stable within—for the nobler spirit of his nature has never been heard speaking with the stern voice of unalterable uncompromising duty. Testimony is suspected because it varies. Human opinions are full of doubt, for virtue alone is one, and vice many. And men, in the eyes of such a sceptic, are nothing but vicious machines, swayed about by every impact of sense. Religion, of course, there is none ; for there is nothing from which to infer it,—no order of nature, where nature is a heap of disorder : no voice of conscience, where a moral being within is unfelt ; no authority of tradition, where all testimony is full of suspicion ; no moral influence of example, where moral agents are unknown. What is true of physical knowledge and religion, applies equally to morals. And thus the whole of nature is unsettled, and the fabric of man and of society falls in one chaos to the ground.

Such is the connection between the doctrine of Heraclitus, asserting the perpetual flux of matter, and the demoralization of the Sophistical school. And we may be well alarmed at the example, when every day physical science is rising into undue pre-eminence, and withdrawing men's eyes from that moral world, which alone can fix our duties, and realize our perfection.

It is very true, that at present it is not taking precisely the same line of mischief, in which the Ionian school terminated. The uniformity of nature, which has

been proved by our experimental philosophy, rather engenders dogmatism than doubt at first; but ultimately the result will be the same. This very uniformity, so wonderful, so attractive, and so full of power, will absorb men's minds, and withdraw them from holding communion with the moral world. In this way they will lose sight of the moral world, and, with the moral world, of the only stable ground of positive certainty. For after all, experience is not like intuition. The bond which holds together the series of material changes, is not like the indissoluble union of our moral sentiments: experience may fracture the one, but it cannot touch the other. We can believe that the sun, which rises in the east to-day, may, by an altered law, rise in the west to-morrow; but we cannot believe that goodness will be hateful, or vice be rewarded, or virtue be indifferent to a virtuous being, or disobedience to superior wisdom become a duty, at any time, in any place, under any convulsion of nature. The whole universe of the physical creation may be overturned without any destruction to our real being. Rivers may run backward to their sources, fire descend downward to the earth, the courses of the stars be reversed, the poison of to-day become the food of to-morrow, the very elemental law of all outward things be repealed, and instead of all things following as they have been, what once has been may never be again; but even in this vast ruin, moral truths would still remain unaltered and unalterable, on which a good and holy mind would rest as on a rock,—

> "Si fractus illabatur orbis,
> Impavidum ferient ruinæ."

But if man has no such rock, even without such a physical convulsion there is much to shake his belief. There is the *possibility* of changes; the suspicion, and more than suspicion, the common belief of man, of disturbances in the order of nature: there is the

ignorance of the individual; the multitude of apparent anomalies; the succession of rival theories, rising and falling upon each other, like the sand hills in an hour-glass. And after all we know but little, very little, of the physical world; and our conviction of its immutability is an exercise of faith, not the forced result of experience. We believe that all things will continue in order, because He that made all things is good. Any other reason is, indeed, vain. Remove, therefore, the sense of an overruling Being, by thinking too much of his works; lose sight of the Creator in the creature, and this ground of certainty goes likewise. But then think of that which must come sooner or later, the "*crux ultima*" of human belief—the weary mind, the aching heart, the sick solitude, the bed of death, those hours when men can no more drown themselves in the intoxication of experiments,—cannot pick roots, or sort flints, or anatomize beetles,—when though the whole physical world were thrown open to us, not all its mysteries together could fill up one corner of a desolated heart, nor all its treasures purchase one drop of cold water for the burning of the tongue; and in those hours, if nothing is left to animate and quiet, but the uniformity of matter, what is to become of man? He may pass through life as a piece of machinery, conforming himself to the machinery of nature, and consolidating himself into it as a part; and when he triumphs by succumbing to its laws, and cleaves through the water without winds, and flies into the air, though nature has chained him to the ground, and is swept along by a little vapour over raised-up mountains of rubbish, and through dark holes fathoms underground; he may stand in the pride of his heart, by the black, panting, steaming, monster which drags him along, and rejoice that, after all, he himself is the *great locomotive* of the world, and that the order

of nature is nothing but a tram-road for him to work on. And all this will do very well, till the engine blows up, or breaks down, or till he reaches to the end of his journey, cold, comfortless, and solitary—with a night, and a dark night, before him. It will be happy, very happy, for such a man, if nothing worse than a sense of desolation follows upon such an absorption of thought; if even then, when men still in their strength would cheer him by the miracles of art, he only turns, like a weary child, worn out with the wonders of a play, and cries himself to sleep upon the breast of his mother. But if his mother is not there to receive him, the case is, indeed, hopeless, and utter despondency must follow. In one word, let us not suppose that the passion for physical science is at all less likely now than hitherto to end in a moral scepticism. The end will be one step removed, but that is all. We may think that we have moored our belief to the side of an island, but the moment the fire is lighted we shall find that, like Sinbad, we have cast anchor on the back of a whale.

Many other symptoms might be collected to show, that as a nation we are in danger of rapidly losing that power of moral vision, without which a nation perishes. The sophistical doctrine, that every man is the measure of all things; that the feeling of the moment, under the name of conscience, is the only standard of right and wrong; that a numerical majority of voices is not indeed the test of truth, for truth is supposed to be beyond the reach of man, but the guide to be followed both in morals and religion; that the fancy of each individual, as to possible expediency, is to be the rule of political conduct, instead of old written laws, and still older inherited maxims; these, and many other similar things, are fatal indications of an approaching plague. In both the great divisions of erring Christianity, the sophistical doctrine is fully developed.

In Dissent, indeed, it is openly avowed; in Romanism openly repudiated and secretly followed. In both there is the same departure from external law and Catholic antiquity; only in Dissent every individual is a sophist; in Romanism the whole society collectively in the person of its heads. In like manner our views of education are veering round to the same point with the notions of Hippias and Protagoras. We hear much of a variety of accomplishments, indiscriminately accumulated, and ostentatiously displayed. The same problems regarding education meet us now, as in the days of Plato—whether it is education or instruction, a discipline for the whole man, or a pouring in of facts into the sieve of his memory; whether it is to be conducted on the old maxims of our forefathers, or new modelled by some sophist of the day; whether it must be connected with religion, or torn from it; whether truth be a necessary ingredient in it, or practical knowledge only be required; that is, so much knowledge as may serve to fill a man's pocket in the world, as the rhetoric of Gorgias enabled the young Athenian to become the pampered demagogue of Athens. If oral instruction is diminishing, so it was at Athens; if books are multiplying upon us, and books of the most frivolous kind, so it was at Athens; if a shifting and changing of opinion has destroyed all confidence in public men, so it was at Athens; if the infection has been spread from abroad, and smuggled in, like other diseases, through the wares of Germany and France, so it was at Athens. Their sophists were also foreigners. And if their young men were the first to catch the plague, we may well look to ours [1].

[1] Of those who are safe under the protection and guidance of the Church, it is happily unnecessary to speak; but there is a class elsewhere, and a very numerous and important

It is a painful parallel, which renders the revival, at this moment, of the study of Plato a matter of no little interest to a philosophical observer. It indicates a sense of the evil, though perhaps not of its definite form. It promises subsidiary aid,—so much aid as sound philosophy can give to sound religion,—to the efforts of the Catholic Church, which only can save the country from the same ruin of its people and its liberties, its morals and religion, which befel the Athenians.

class, the medical students of the metropolis, who, we fear, would little bear a scrutiny into their condition; and, there is reason to believe, are at this moment falling a prey to one of the worst forms of sophistry, under a recognized teacher of materialism. We hear much of the slavery of negroes, and the duty of converting the heathen; it is to be hoped that some Christian mind will soon rouse the attention of the country to this most alarming point in the present condition of the metropolis, and the necessity of creating something like a collegiate system for our great Medical Schools and Hospitals.

CHAPTER X.

And now we may proceed to observe the means which Plato adopted to destroy the mischief at its roots; and they may not be uninstructive to ourselves in our present very similar condition.

He began, then, with destroying the authority of the teachers of this new school. He knew that no doctrines can spread, unsupported by a personal influence; and the influence of ostentatious knowledge, and real powers of intellect, was only to be undermined in three ways,—by exposing the fallacy of their pretensions, and humbling them by ridicule; by exhibiting equal powers, and very similar accomplishments in his own works; and by attracting from them to himself the personal respect and attachment of the young.

Hence, in the first place, the irony, sarcasm, and elenctic character of all his preliminary dialogues, in which sophists are introduced and exposed, before the mind of the reader is transferred to the positive instructions of Plato himself. To give full scope to this design, as well as to embody his reasoning in a dialectical and dramatic form, it was necessary to adopt some character which should unite the powers of ridicule and grave teaching, and blend the comedy and tragedy of philosophy in that dramatic form so congenial to the Athenian taste. The same principle which led to the exhibition of living characters on the stage, pointed to Socrates as the man to represent this part. We know from the faithful, affectionate account of Xenophon, who seems to have

written with a view to vindicate the character of his master from the travesties to which he was exposed, that mere human reason rarely rose to a purer practical morality, than the ethics of Socrates. It is clear, also, both from the Clouds, and from Plato, that there were about him many personal peculiarities, oddness of appearance, coarseness, at times, of illustration, and habits of life, which made him a very fitting subject for this ethical caricature; not a caricature intended to ridicule, but necessary for carrying on a plot, and just sufficiently heightened to excite a smile without destroying the resemblance. We know as a fact, that the Lysis, which was published before his death, contains things which by his own declaration he never said. The metaphysical arguments of Plato also are wholly unlike the plain practical ethics, on which the fame of Socrates had rested[1]. Anachronisms, studiously introduced, prove that the dialogues themselves are not narratives of facts, but historical fictions; and the very name given to them by Aristotle, Σωκρατικοὶ λόγοι, as ranked with the poetry of the drama, proves that they were works of imagination,—creations, not relations. We are therefore not to look in the Socrates of Plato for the real living Socrates. He is rather a more serious personification of the Greek comedy, with its deep solemn truths within it, and a strange face of mockery without; or, to use a common illustration, the model of moral beauty encased in a corporeal Silenus[2]. It is remarkable, but in perfect consistency with the object assumed, that all his irony and jesting, the solemn dissimulation of his meaning, the grave, ingenious, ignis-fatuus-like trickery with which he plays on before an unsuspecting disputant, and draws

[1] Degerando [Histoire de Systèmes, vol. ii. p. 129] says the same.

[2] Alcibiades i. Convivium.

him, step after step, into the middle of a quagmire, is reserved wholly for the sophists. It never enters into a dialogue, where young men are the immediate learners, or old men the inquirers after truth. He is always far from personal pretensions; more anxious to stimulate curiosity than to indulge the indolence of learning; but he never displays the slightest approach to a heartless sneering cavilling; nothing but honest unaffected endeavours to bring minds to the knowledge of truth. Nothing can be more grotesque than the writhings of the angry sophist, once entangled in the meshes of Socrates. Sometimes it ends in silence; sometimes in a humbled confession; not unfrequently in charges of unfairness, and no little violence of language [1]. But the effect is complete,—the sophist exposed, and the spell broken.

To the second object mentioned, that of raising a counteracting attraction to the brilliant shop-window of the sophist, we must attribute much of the poetical embellishment and elaborate finish of the Platonic writings. The so-often censured floridness of the Phædrus is avowedly employed for this purpose. The Menexenus, instead of being, as supposed, a grave panegyric on that Athenian democracy, which Plato never thought of without compassion for the people, and indignation and disgust at their leaders, is an exhibition of popular rhetoric, to show how easily he might excel in a style of rhetorical flattery, which he expressly repudiates and disdains. All minute attention to language he censures, both in the Politician and the laws; and yet the language of Plato is the perfection of style. Consider this as a practical effort to win the attention of the young, and every thing is consistent; look on it merely as an exhibition of taste, and it is perfectly unintelligible. On the same principle the recurrence is

[1] Republ. b. i.

to be explained of his gorgeous myths, which appear to have been imitated after a practice of Protagoras[1].

The foundation of the Academy and the plan for perpetuating a school, both projects unknown before at modern Athens, are indications of the third mode mentioned, in which he proposed to counteract the personal influence of the sophists.

His next object was to attack their theory in its vital point, and to raise up some solid foundation for a structure of human knowledge, something to resist scepticism; a sort of hurricane house, against the whirl of sensation, opinion, and feeling. For this purpose, and not as a mere hypothetical speculation, he built up his doctrine of Ideas. I hope to enlarge on this more fully in another place; it is sufficient at present to point out its three grand features.

In the first place it asserted the existence of certain fixed forms and shapes in the material world, laws which regulated its movement, types after which its combinations were formed, in opposition to that view of it which considered it as a jumble of atoms, or a chaos of shapeless accidents, or fluctuating movements. It gave what the Baconian philosophy gave, under precisely the same name of *forms*, system and order to the visible creation; and a system founded, whether rightly or not, at least in perfect agreement with almost every theory of physical science, on a scheme of classification.

In establishing this system as something prior to, and distinct from human conceptions, and as fixing limits which human sensation could not pass, it placed over even our sensations an external law; something which modified sense, but which sense could not modify, and which, therefore, is the basis

[1] Protagoras.

for physical truth—a fixed standard, existing, even if not found, to which we must bring our conceptions of the physical world, and by which they may be tested.

He extended the same assertion to the moral world—declared that by the very constitution of the mind certain notions and feelings were so intimately associated together as to be wholly incapable of separation. For instance, the perception of truth, enjoyment of truth, and desire to attain it; in the same manner, the rightness of justice, its agreeableness to a law within us, its beauty, and a conviction of its expediency—in the same manner particular perceptions following unerringly and universally upon the placing before the mind certain objects in certain connection with each other, in other words, ideas of relation—these formed a second class of the *ideas* or *forms*, or groups and shapes of things, created by nature, stamped upon the soul indelibly, which man cannot break or dissolve, which are wholly beyond his power to change, which never do change, and which we cannot conceive it possible to change, which fix, therefore, an immutable standard, and give a foundation and test for moral truth.

Still these latter were subjective certainties; that is; they were immutable combinations existing in the human mind; and even the eternal forms of the material world, in a certain sense, were subjective, inasmuch as the perception of external objects may be reduced wholly to states of mind, and therefore are ultimately subjective.

But subjective certainty, however strong and universal, does not satisfy the demand of men for necessary, unalterable truth. Unless we believe in something above, and beyond us, wholly unmoved by our fancies, and independent of our sensations, we do not feel that we possess a sure and solid ground for

belief. The mind must be anchored somewhere, and that somewhere must be a solid rock, not part of the ship itself. This rock and anchorage for the mind is to the Christian the whole spiritual world, revealed to his sight by Christianity. He never saw this world, has no proof of its existence, no proof that is, which, if he choose to cavil, he may not be able to dispute. We may dispute every thing. But he has been told that it exists, and he believes the tale, because it is *natural* that he *should* believe the statement of others; and his belief remains firm, because nothing adequate occurs to make him distrust his informants; he believes upon their testimony. In the same manner Plato proposed to realize to the minds of his hearers an unseen world, a place higher than the dim sight of men, untouched by sublunary changes, prior to the creation of the visible world, in which men's thoughts were to be fixed, and where, when his perfection was accomplished, he was hereafter to dwell. The existence of some such world is a necessary anticipation of man's nature; it forms a part of every mythology, and of the creed of the savage. It is not till we have penetrated far into the depths of metaphysics, and thrown such light upon the formation of our ideas, as to reduce all things else to total darkness, that man dreams of a subjective existence, and a subjective existence only, as true or possible.

But rationalism necessarily leads to this tendency to subjectiveness. It does so in the present day. Men who have lost their perception of other moral beings commanding their belief, and engaging their thoughts and affections, if they do not throw themselves upon the world of matter, busy themselves in scrutinizing the nature of themselves. Hence so much of our literature, which is not taken up with physical science, is made up of a display of feelings;

of confessions, and autobiographies, of descriptions of distempered minds, of anatomical preparations of sins and follies put into glass-cases, and exhibited by the diseased parties themselves. Every man is thinking of himself; and so it was at Athens. But we have a ground to fall back upon in bringing men back from this miserable state of self-consciousness, which Plato had not. We have the Church; and her existence and her testimony fully and boldly put forward will restore men to their senses. It will rouse them from this moral somnambulism in which they are plunged at present, by the vivid action of an object external to themselves, against which they cannot close their eyes, or from which, when once seen, withdraw their senses. But Plato was compelled in the first place to go to reason. He could find little in the popular religion, which could be consecrated to such a purpose as the creation before the eye of the mind of an unseen and perfect world. All that he could do was to argue from the visible to the invisible, from the imperfect to the perfect. This world, he reasoned [1], is the work of design [2]; design implies an end, and an end existing before the means by which it is accomplished. This end requires a form or model for the machinery which creates it; therefore, prior to the creation of the world there must have been types and patterns somewhere before the eye of the Creator, after which all things were formed, and up to which, as we find from experience, all our observations of nature lead, because we find its productions classified under certain heads, and reproducing unity of plan, in an infinite variety of shapes. Great, very great obscurity rests upon the objective character of those ideas or examples of the physical creation. But those who study him most, will, we think, recognize most clearly a picture, un-

[1] Timæus. [2] Laws, b. x.

defined indeed, but brilliant and very real, of a sort of heaven—of locality and relations, and objective reality, which a Christian will not fail to compare with the more positive but not more distinct enunciations of the Scriptures.

But such a heaven, even the heaven of the Phædo, the treasure-house of all physical glories, is not enough to satisfy the heart. There must be also within it an Informing Spirit, by whom the heavens themselves were made, and in whose eternal immutable nature, anterior to all things and the cause of all things, the germ of the whole universe, spiritual and physical, lay hid, before it pleased him to call it into existence[1]; who made it all for good; shaped it after types of good; impressed his character upon all; and therefore to whose character alone all goodness and all truth must be referred. And Him, the Maker of the world, the King of all flesh and of all spirits; who is to the world of spirits what the sun is to the world of sense, the ruler of its movements and cause of its life[2]; who gives truth to outward things, and faith to the soul that perceives it; who is the source of all power, beauty of all beauties, truth of all truths, law of all laws, goodness of all goodness, —Plato, with that trembling awe, with which all good and holy minds fall down in the presence of such a mystery, endeavoured to reveal to his corrupt and blinded age as the last and only hope of saving a few souls from the wreck. How he proposed to realize it to them is the next question to be answered. How does he accord or not with Christianity, on the fundamental problem of the mode, in which truth is to be taught and engrafted on the mind of man, whether by authority or by rationalism? The answer will follow.

[1] Timæus. [2] Republic, b. vi.

CHAPTER XI.

That unhesitating, uncompromising grasp of principles, which Plato, as well as Christianity, declared to be necessary not only to human knowledge, but to human action[1], he endeavoured to confirm in this point, as in others, by a dialectical process, which tested every hypothesis advanced by its concordance with acknowledged truth, especially with the order of nature, and the moral constitution of man. What faith is in Christianity, science, so far as science implies positive undoubting belief, is to Plato. They are both modes of obtaining absolute subjective certainty. But Plato was compelled to make this belief rest on demonstration; that is, on the seeming agreement of truth with itself; that seeming agreement depending on the constitution of each individual mind, and requiring a logical process wholly beyond the reach of all but the educated few. Now Christianity demands it as a duty; fixes it by repetition as a habit; demands it upon authority, not on demonstration; upon the testimony of many others, not on the testimony of our own single self; justifies the demand by the weight and vastness of the testimony produced; appeals to man's heart, before his head, and to those affections of the heart which are the soonest developed, and the last to be corrupted,—the trustfulness of a mind conscious of its own weakness, and docile under the guidance of superiors. It thus ensures its possession over the child from his in-

[1] Repub. passim.

fancy; never leaves him alone in a world of doubt without some fixed habitual principles; makes his certainty independent of the perpetual fluctuation of daily opinions without, and of passing fancies and feelings within him; does not exclude demonstration, but never renders it necessary; obtains for him thus a hold over a whole world of truths, which are either beyond the reach of demonstration, or which demonstration could never bring home to his heart; and makes the very act of belief a moral virtue, by requiring in it an exercise of principle, which may be entirely wanting in the most perfect conviction of the reason. It gives to the child and the peasant, without any stipulation for those talents which are the rarest gifts of nature, knowledge, which the wisest of heathens vainly sought for; so that, in the words even of a French philosopher [1], "à la faveur des lumières qu'elle a communiquées au monde, le peuple même est plus instruit, et plus decidé sur un grand nombre de questions intéressantes que ne l'ont été les sectes des philosophes." And without waiting the slow and precarious process of raising the trees of truth from chance and thinly scattered seeds, it covers with them the whole field of human nature, and plants them at once full grown and full of blossom, to bring forth their fruit in due season.

This instrument for implanting knowledge in the human mind, was not within the reach of Plato. His belief was the belief of an individual, worked out to outward eyes by the energies of his own mind. There was no joint voice of an established society, no prejudice of early years, no habitual reverence of office, no connection with an organized system of testimony, preserving his doctrines, as one common deposit in the most remote regions, and transmitting

[1] Condorcet.

them as the inheritance of ages. He stood before those whom he would teach, with no power of appealing except to their own reason. And he could recognize no certainty except where that reason approved [1]. And yet (it is one of the most important features in his system, and one which renders it so applicable to uphold truth in the present day), Plato does recognize the principle of faith wherever he can possibly employ it.

In the first place, on the subject of religion—

"Of the nature of the other deities," he says in the Timæus, "to speak or to describe their generation is beyond our power. We must believe those who have spoken to us of them from days of yore—children as they were, and as they called themselves, of the Gods, and knowing well their own forefathers. As children of the Gods we may not dare distrust them, even though the truths they tell us have no correspondences in experience, nor admit of a necessary demonstration. They tell us of things they knew, and have heard and seen and felt, and we must obey the law and believe [2]."

So also in the education of the young—

"Supposing," he says in the Laws (B. 1) "that you have framed your statutes with even moderate prudence, one of the best and noblest of them all will be this—that you prohibit any young man whatever from inquiring curiously which laws are good, and which are bad. And that you all, with one voice and mouth, unanimously proclaim that all alike are good, because the Gods established them. If any one speak otherwise, close your ears, and do not endure to listen. And if an old man be conscious of a defect in them, let all conversation upon it be confined to the magistrates and the old, and no young man be allowed to overhear it."

[1] Theætetus.

[2] The word is still stronger in the Greek, and would suggest many solemn Christian thoughts, *τὰ οἰκεῖα*—things relating to their own home and family.

And again, in the Laws (B. 2), where he speaks of the departed taking an interest in the affairs of this life.

"The statements which contain these doctrines are true but long. But on all such matters we must trust both to the traditions which relate to them, numerous as they are and of vast antiquity, and trust also to the framers of our laws, unless they teach what is wholly senseless."

In another passage of the Laws he says—

"He that is to take his place amongst the perfectly blest and good, must be partaker of the truth from the very beginning of his life; that all that is possible of life may be spent in enjoyment of truth."

In other words, truths must be engrafted in the mind of the child long before he is able to understand them; and no dreary blank be left, no previous state of darkness before he is admitted to the light. His eyes are closed at his birth, and we are not to leave him in a dungeon, till he opens them and calls for light, but to pour the light gradually upon them, and couch them at the same time in order to admit it. It is the principle of infant baptism in heathen philosophy.

Such a process as this necessarily requires faith in the child, that he may submit himself to the hands of his instructor, and receive from him unexamined the doctrines which are afterwards to be unfolded. The same principles are indicated by the very form of instruction, into which the Dialogues of Plato are cast; a form which is constructed on dialectical principles [1], and those principles intimately connected with the very foundation of his system. The essential feature in the Platonic dialectics is the intervention of a

[1] Repub. b. vii.

second person [1], to give birth to, and shape, and test the spontaneous creations of the mind of the pupil. It might be very possible for a student in his closet to master and apply the whole logical system of Aristotle, using his formularies of argument, and carrying on long processes of synthetical reasoning, as a child can play the game of patience by himself. But the analytical process of Plato, which insists on arriving at truth by overthrowing preliminary errors, and the principal object of which [2] is to bring men to a sense of their ignorance, before it communicates knowledge—this can no more be carried on by ourselves than any other exercise, the value and interest of which consists in the possible defeat of the performer. It is a game of chess, and cannot be played single-handed.

A more direct enunciation of the principle is contained in the crowning part of the Constitution of the Republic—a body of aged men, placed at the head of the state as the depositories of great truths [3], and those truths the truths of religion. For whatever be the veil of metaphysics thrown over this part of Plato's writings, cautiously perhaps to avoid the jealousy of the Athenians, we must never forget that philosophy and religion were with Plato indissolubly connected. "Cujus scientiæ," says Lactantius, "summam breviter circumscribo, ut neque religio ulla sine sapientiâ suscipienda sit, nec ulla sine religione probanda sapientia [4]." By them the education of the state is to be conducted; they are to discipline and form a perpetual succession of such teachers, by a long course of experimental instruction, and thus to transmit unimpaired their treasures of original truths, as the very palladium of the state. These are the "guardians and conservators of the

[1] Theætetus. [2] Protagoras. [3] Republic, b. vi.
[4] Lactant. de Falsâ Religione, lib. i.

society;" and such a system could be maintained only by holding together all the parts of the state in a permanent and regular subordination through faith, or a childlike confidence in the authority of the instructors.

Even in the personal character of Plato's thoughts, with all his necessary rationalism, there is a constant vein of trustful feeling running throughout—a willingness to receive truth for granted when coming from competent authority—a tendency to cast himself for support upon the guidance, testimony, and control of others, looking to their moral superiority as the fit guarantee, rather than to the assent of his own individual reason. It is seen in his constant allusion to those old traditionary streams of ancient revelation, the παλαιοὶ λόγοι of his ancestors; in his fond and reverential returns to the mysteries[1] and myths of the East; in the stern and authoritative tone, with which he supports the dictates of the laws of his country, whether Socrates[2] is commanded by them to die, or an hereditary mythology is enforced[3]. If a ceremonial of religion is to be established, it is referred to the oracles of his ancestors. If the real ground is to be stated of his hopes of immortality, as distinct from the possible arguments, which reason might bring to their support, it is rested on the spontaneous belief, a belief of the heart rather than of the head, that God is good, and, as good, is a rewarder of goodness. But the noblest and most decisive passage is found in the tenth book of the Laws.

"How," says he, when about to enter on the argument of natural theology, (and it might be well for those who

[1] Phædo, Critias, Phædrus. [2] Crit.

[3] Laws. So in Repub. lib. iv. p. 136, speaking of the establishment of a ritual, &c. τὰ γὰρ τοιαῦτα οὔτ' ἐπιστάμεθα ἡμεῖς, οἰκίζοντές τε πόλιν, οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ πεισόμεθα, ἐὰν νοῦν ἔχωμεν, οὐδὲ χρησόμεθα ἐξηγητῇ, ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ πατρίῳ.

are giving undue weight to that theology to see where Plato laid the real foundation of belief)—"how without passion can we reason to prove the existence of God? It must be with bitterness of heart—with hatred and indignation against men, who compel us to engage in such an argument. They who once trusted to the tales, which from their childhood, when lying on the breast, they used to hear from their nurses and their mothers—tales told to soothe or awe them, and repeated like charms above their cradles — who heard them blended at the altar with prayers, and all the pomps and rituals so fair to the eye of, a child; — while those same parents were offering up their sacrifices with all solemnity — earnestly and awfully praying for themselves and for their children, and with vows and supplications holding communion with God, as indeed a living God;—who, when the sun and the moon arose, and passed again to their settings, heard of, and witnessed all around them the kneeling and prostrate forms of Greeks and barbarians alike—all men in all their joys and all their sorrows, clinging as it were to God, not as an empty name, but as their all in all; and never suffering the fancy to intrude, that God has no existence;—they who have despised all this—and without one justifying cause compel us now to reason as we do—how can such men expect, that with calm and gentle words we should be able to admonish and to teach them the existence of a God?"

Such is the decision of Plato on the fundamental question in the education of man, the use and importance of authority; not that Aristotle would have answered otherwise [1], or any other sect worthy of the name of philosophy. Even the Pyrrhonist recognised authority as the foundation of his unbelief, and by the common consent of mankind endeavoured to prove that no such consent could be trusted [2]. In the same manner the still lower school of Sophistry, which made each man "the measure of all things," had, notwithstanding, its teachers and pupils, and held out

[1] Ethics, b. i. c. 3.

[2] See Sect. Empir. passim.

its promises of instruction, with a demand of confidence in their wisdom. And in its most degraded and vitiated form of a Callicles [1] or a Thrasymachus [2], it only transferred the authority from a reason without to a passion within, and still gave up the individual as a slave to a power which impelled him blindly, he knew not whither.

Undoubtedly, wherever we turn, this is the question, the question of authority, that meets us, and re-appears in every difficulty which embarrasses either the Church or the country. Every age has some one principle, or, to use a phrase very current in the new speculations of France, "represents an idea of its own," which it is the business of the philosophical observer to detect, and of those who are appointed to watch over the minds of men to regulate or expel; and this is the idea of the present day. Our legislation, year after year, is a series of concessions to the people, because no one, it is said, but the people has a right to pronounce on their own interests or duties. The state is to be desecrated and unchristianized, because no human power may decide between contending opinions in religion. The polity of the Church is set aside, because man must not bend to man, but must be left in independence and solitude to judge of the mysteries of Heaven by the taper-light of his own reason alone, and to worship his Maker as he chooses. Our old schemes of education are to be remodelled to meet the wishes and opinions of those, to correct and control whose opinions all education is appointed. And when a new system is established, as in Ireland, for a whole nation to be won over to the truth, the same fatal *idea* rises up, and, as if by special contrivance, the very notion of authority is extinguished in the minds of the young,

[1] Gorgias. [2] Republic.

by bringing their teachers before them in direct and perpetual collision, on the most solemn of subjects; and by exhibiting in their daily tasks a conflict of difficulties and doubts [1], which can end but in an alternative of evils—either absolute unbelief on the one hand, or absolute subjection on the other, to the boldest assumer of a spiritual despotism. How is it that we have fallen into this gulf? How is it that we have forgotten not only the arguments of reason, but the first and best instincts of our hearts; instincts that rise up before our face, at the very moment we attempt to belie them, and which we may misuse and calumniate, but cannot extinguish? We are unsettling the foundation of Christianity by resting it on the false support of an unsound natural theology—because we distrust the true basis on which it was placed by its Founder—the testimony of its teachers. We are admitting into our philosophical schools, cold, feeble, undigested novelties, to engross and mislead the public mind, if the word *leading* can be applied to an influence, which only retards and embarrasses—because we are ashamed to acknowledge our adherence to the guides of antiquity. We are directing both public measures and private duties, measuring our politics and our ethics by the most false and fatal standard that human ingenuity ever devised, the standard of expediency; cutting off all reference to the past; denying the providence of Him who in making goodness the law of the world, made it also the preservation of the world; stifling our natural affections; annihilating the very essence of virtue; converting life into a business of calculation, and of calculation without data or end—simply because we are afraid of walking humbly by the precedents of our forefathers, of taking old

[1] See Scripture Lessons of the Irish Education Board.

lights to guide us in old ways, of trusting to the prejudices of nature, and boldly replying by her voice, as it is echoed by the mass of mankind, to those cavils of a curious casuistry—"why is this right, and this wrong?—why are we pleased, or why are we pained?" as if it were not enough to say, that we approve and censure, and love and hate, and believe and obey, because nature has formed us thus; because such are our natural feelings, and we know they are true to nature, because no warning voice from the rightful interpreters of nature has risen to condemn them—as if nothing was true which did not come within the range of our own knowledge—nothing to be admitted as the witness of a power above ourselves—nothing believed until proved, instead of all things believed until disproved. And all this arises from one and the same source, our contempt or distrust of authority.

Such was not the language of the old apologists, when they were called on to defend Christianity against the charge of a credulous faith. Even with far less advantages than ours—their persons despised, their polity not yet consolidated, their supernatural power denied, or paralleled with those of adversaries; with no support from the confession of the civilized world, or the tradition of eighteen centuries, they still met the charge face to face, and even in the midst of the most powerful appeals to reason, directed to the refutation of heathens, they upheld the principle of faith as applied to the education of Christians. "How," say they, "can a physician heal the sick, if the sick will not trust to his skill[1]?" "How can grammar, or geometry, or astronomy, or any other science or art, be taught, unless men, on the authority of their teachers, receive lessons which they do

[1] Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. i.

not understand[1]?" Who waits till he has examined opinions before he allies himself to a sect, or could even select his party, if he thus shrunk from committing himself to a teacher, in the fear lest his confidence should be abused? Such is the dictate of nature. All men, in the words of Cicero, "Ante tenentur astricti, quam quid esset optimum, judicare potuerunt. Deinde infirmissimo tempore ætatis, aut obsecuti amico cuidam, aut unâ alicujus quem primum audierunt oratione capti, de rebus incognitis judicant, et ad quamcumque sunt disciplinam quasi tempestate delati, ad eam tanquam ad saxum adhærescunt[2]." And without such a happy law of attraction, to give order and stability to the world, society would be reduced into atoms; and those atoms left fluctuating about in a chaos of doubt and darkness; or rather sinking into stagnation, because in reasoning beings no part can move where none is at rest, and may serve as a resting-place to others. On this principle of faith depends the whole activity of life.

"Who," says Origen, "embarks upon a voyage, who marries a wife, who begets children, who cultivates the soil, except in the trust of good to come; though evil still may come, and often does come? And yet this hope and faith sends many courageously on deeds, where none can tell the end; how much rather for a cause far other than a voyage, a marriage, or a harvest, shall we repose this faith in Him, who endured such sufferings for us, and sent out his disciples upon earth, braving danger, and exile, and death, for the salvation of man."—*Origen, cont. Cels.* lib. i. c. 11.

[1] Theodoret. Græc. Affec. Cur. lib. i.
[2] Cicero, Acad. Quæst. lib. ii.

CHAPTER XII.

I HAVE now finished this rough sketch, not of the philosophy of Plato, for that would require a very different kind of discussion, but of the plan on which his philosophy seems to have formed itself, to meet the exigences of his melancholy times. If any other can be framed, which serves more clearly to open the many acknowledged cyphers in his works, and give aim to their meaning, and order to their seeming confusion, this must be still more near to the truth. But no theory, which leaves them as they are in the eyes of the world—an undigested mass of oratory and poetry, scepticism and dogmatism, irony and seriousness, more like the wreck and ruin of a noble mind, than a system organized and revised by him to the last moments of his life, can do justice to the intention, or can interpret the sentiments of him who, by common consent, is the "father and king of philosophy."

I have wished to show that his aim was practical, not idle speculation—that it was directed, in all its parts, against a most false and pernicious school, the natural product of the rationalistic licentious age in which he lived. If his system is to be revived now, let it be revived in this form, and directed against the same nuisance, and it may do the Church and the country infinite service. In this view it appears, in England, men are beginning to feel, if not to understand it. And my object is, as much as lies in my power, to bring it more fully to the light.

I propose therefore to follow up these observations

on the general tendency of the philosophy of Plato, by an examination of one of his principal Dialogues, the Phædrus. It may not be useless, if opportunity offers, to provide the general reader, and particularly young students, with a similar introduction to all his genuine writings. No part of Greek literature stands in such need of interpretation and preface. But the Phædrus is the first Dialogue to be examined, not only from its obvious relation to the others, as containing the germ of them all, but from its chronological date, and the peculiar complexity of its structure.

[1] In many of the older editions it is placed much out of order. Fabricius[2], following Laertius, presses it into the third Tetralogy; Petit into the seventh. In the little Leipsic edition of 1829, to which for convenience our own references are made, it is rejected almost to the last. But Schleiermacher, with Bekker, and others, have restored it to its proper position, as the introduction to all the rest. This is not done on account solely of the priority of its publication. Both Laertius, indeed[3], and Olympiodorus in his Life of Plato, assert, on the authority of Aristoxenus, that it was composed before any others. But Laertius's statements are not always to be trusted; and both critics seem to argue its early date after all upon the internal evidence of a seemingly juvenile and florid style. In this view they are followed by Schleiermacher, Van Heusde, and Ast; but Stalbaum[4] has properly denied its correctness. The Phædrus contains too much of the whole system of the Platonic philosophy, and bears too close an

[1] Proclus makes the Alcibiades the first dialogue, as being that which unravels the principle of self-knowledge as the beginning of all purification.—*Proclus in Alcibiad. Cousin*, t. ii.

[2] Biblioth. Græc. [3] iii. 25, sect. 38.

[4] Præf. ad Phædr. p. 19.

affinity to the Republic, to have been written before that system was fully matured. It contains evident references to Pythagorean doctrines[1]; a fact which would seem to place its date subsequent to Plato's journey into Sicily and Magna Græcia. And its art and skill, when seen in the right point of view, are too admirable to have been exhibited in a mere youthful exercise. The fact is, that we know little, or rather nothing satisfactory, of the order in which the Dialogues were written. And even if we had a register before us, it would very little assist us, in discovering their philosophical arrangement. The most perfect system is often wrought out by very desultory efforts. The preface to a work is commonly the last part written. And other portions are taken up and laid aside according to the fancy or occasion of the hour.

But the internal evidence which places the Phædrus first, as an intended introduction to the whole series, is very strong indeed, and contributes much to confirm the tradition of Laertius. An attentive eye may trace in it a completeness and compression, like the reduction of an extensive landscape into the lens of a telescope[2]; or rather it seems the embryo, in which all the lines and limbs of Platonic philosophy lie wrapped in their crude form, to be drawn out in subsequent dialogues, and fully developed in the perfect organization of the Republic.

There is also another reason why the Phædrus is the first Dialogue which claims attention. It is the most striking of them all, most singular, at the first view most incoherent, most strongly marked with the peculiar character of Plato's thoughts and style of

[1] Hierocles in Aur. Car. ad v. 69.

[2] Proclus says the same of Alcibiades i. vol. ii. Proclus, Cousin, p. 29.

composition, most perplexing in its structure, and at the same time most startling in its ethical tone. In a rhetorical point of view, in which men have too long been accustomed to lose sight of Plato's philosophy, the Phædrus has evidently been the sample, on which philologists have justified their animadversions. Laertius censures it as puerile, μειρακιῶδες; Dicæarchus as vulgarly extravagant; Olympiodorus as dithyrambic. Plutarch[1] ridicules its description of landscape scenery; Hermeas[2] repeats the criticism of his day upon it, as "coarse, inflated, bombastic and artificial;" Longinus alludes to similar censures on the "wild extravagant diction, harsh metaphors, and forced allegories" imputed generally to Plato, but which are scarcely to be found except in the Phædrus[3]; Dionysius of Halicarnassus[4] hints at the same errors of Plato's style "wherever his philosophy carries him into subjects of a lofty and supernatural character." And every one who fails to see the real drift of the composition, notwithstanding all his prejudices in favour of the "Attic Homer[5]," "the master of Demosthenes[6]," the man whose language would be the language of Jupiter, if Jupiter spoke Greek[7], will rise from it with a similar impression of turgidness and ostentatious pretension.

He will rise with another impression also, of a far more painful and perplexing nature. And it is to be hoped that he will. The Phædrus, more than any other relic of ancient literature, more even than the Comedies of Aristophanes, tears aside the veil which taste, and poetry, and learning, and ignorance of history in many men, and the cant of liberty in still

[1] Amal. 746, A.
[2] Ast's Phæd. p. 63.
[3] Longin. c. 3. 32. 7.
[4] Περὶ Συνθ. c. 18, p. 140.
[5] Longin. c. 13. 1. 3.
[6] Cicero, Orat. 4.
[7] Cicero, Brut. 31.

more, have combined to throw over the hideous deformities of Athenian life. It lays bare scenes and things, which, shocking as they are, we are yet bade by God's own word to look upon at times, that we may learn to hate them. And it is no slight lesson to find them, where inexperienced human fancy is most inclined to imagine perfection, in the midst of unbounded freedom, and philosophy, and refinement, and all the other vanities, on which man's reason prides itself, and which become vanities the moment they are let loose from the control of faith and self-denial. Addison tells the story of a father, who crushed in his son the first seeds of passion and sin by taking him round to their haunts, and laying open to him at once the whole mystery of iniquity. Something of the same kind was undoubtedly contemplated by Plato in the composition of his Phædrus. And benefit may be derived from it to Christians, if it merely exhibit a picture of the miserable state of heathenism, even in the most intellectual portion of the most intellectual age of the most intellectual people in the ancient world.

The young reader will also find in this Dialogue another difficulty, which has perplexed all commentators alike. Where is the unity and regularity of structure, which we should expect from the acknowledged skill of Plato in giving form to his writings, and which on minute examination is so obvious, that Schleiermacher has not hesitated to take it as one of the leading clues to their right arrangement? At first sight, the Dialogue splits into two parts, the former on the nature of Love, and the latter on Rhetoric. And such a binary structure is very common in Plato's writings. It occurs in the Gorgias, which commences with Rhetoric, and ends with Justice; in the Republic, which introduces into the midst of a discussion on Justice (and that too merely

as an illustration) a theory of a social system, which occupies more than three-fourths of the work; in the Sophist, which throws in an inquiry into the nature of abstract being as a parenthesis to a humorous caricature of the Sophist's profession; in the Protagoras, where the conversation diverges from its ethical subject to a criticism on poetry; and in the Philebus, which by the same marsupian structure carries a metaphysical analysis of unity and plurality in the pouch of a treatise upon pleasure. It is evident, from many observations thrown out by Plato himself on the occasion of these digressions, that they are not accidental, but intentional. These seemingly strange and heterogeneous juxtapositions are not to be regarded, as if a careless flow of conversation had forced its own way without thought, taking up every thing which happened to lie in its bed—pebbles, and twigs, and insects, and clay, and hardening them together into one concretion—but they are evidently designed for various purposes. In many instances the one subject is not merely inclosed, but *enwombed* in the other; is connected with it, that is, by a vital link of thought; is born from it; and very often left almost an embryo in one dialogue to be taken up and fully developed in another. Thus, even to the most careless observer, the commencement of the Phædrus leads on to the Lysis, and the Lysis to the Convivium[1]. The latter part again carries on, as it were, a propa-

[1] The connection between the Phædrus and the Convivium is most intimate. But we need not suppose with Stalbaum that the verses of Alexis quoted by Athenæus are sufficient to establish the fact that they were regarded as one work, except as bearing on one subject. Alexis's play is named the Phædrus, and his reference is to a passage in the Convivium. But Phædrus is one of the principal dramatis personæ in both dialogues. The connection is formed by Plato more distinctly, by the reference in the Convivium (p. 182, edit. Stalb.) to the censures upon Love contained in the Phædrus. (See Stalb. Præf. p. 21.)

gation of subject from itself to the Gorgias, and the Gorgias another to the Republic. In other cases a totally distinct vein of thought is thrown up to dislocate a train of inquiry, just as in geological language beds of rock are interrupted by faults. And on such occasions there is a playful apologetic irony accompanying the process, just such as we might imagine would play upon the face of nature, if she amused herself with thus perplexing the labours of the miner, in order to try his patience, and give scope for ingenuity. Still more frequently, especially in the Sophist, the Republic, and the Phædrus, the two subjects are connected by a chain, which can only be traced clearly in the accidental circumstances of the day. They are as two buoys floating side by side, and the cable which ties them together has disappeared under the water, and can only be recovered by diving somewhat deeply into the history of opinions and practices which are now lost to sight.

Not understanding those principles of arrangement, ordinary commentators (and such perhaps must be considered all but the Alexandrian Platonists and later German critics) have been as much perplexed in the attempt to give a title to the Phædrus, as an unscientific anatomist in determining the species of an ornithorhyncus or a tadpole. Some have named it, from its beginning, a Dialogue on Love; others, from its conclusion, a Treatise on Rhetoric. Some have taken the head, others the tail. And as the two parts in their eyes are only sewed together, and not in the most ingenious way, the work exhibits to them a very singular specimen of the monstra or lusus of a philosopher's brain. The Alexandrian commentators have penetrated far more deeply into its organization. They were too strongly impressed with the consummate skill of their adopted master, and with his grand fundamental law of unity, to admit such a phenomenon

in his works as an amorphous structure. And in the high generalizations of their metaphysics they had the means which mere philologists had not, of tracing resemblances and connections in seemingly the most widely separated subjects, and thus harmonizing them together. Much of this process was undoubtedly strained and fanciful; but much also was rational and successful. At any rate they attempted to give unity to the work. Some[1] fixed for its subject the Soul—others the Supreme Good—others the Beautiful—Iamblichus Universal Beauty. Others made it a theological work. According to others it treated of the two emotions of the soul[2], one which carries our affections to heavenly things, the other, which fixes them upon earth; love being the former, rhetoric the main instrument by which the latter grasps at the enjoyment of sense. And thus, says Hermeas, it may be entitled Περὶ Ψυχῆς Ἀρχῆς, On the Principle of the Soul.

Of German critics Schleiermacher considers it as the first sketch and outline of Plato's artist-like workmanship in the development of the true dialectical philosophy. And he establishes, what undoubtedly exists, a connection between the two parts of the Dialogue, by considering the main subject to be Rhetoric; the speeches in the former part to be thrown in as illustrative specimens; and the subject of them, instead of being casually adopted, to be selected with a view to lay the foundation for a subsequent development of the principles of beauty and desire. In this view there is much of truth, but it seems to fall short of a perfect explanation, and leaves much unaccounted for[3]. Ast[4] regards it as an exhibition of the true

[1] Hermeas, Comm. Ast's Edit. Polit. & Phæd. p. 63.

[2] For an illustration of this, see a little work of Norris on Divine Love.

[3] Schleiermacher, Introduction. [4] De Vit. Plat. p. 97.

philosopher in the character of Socrates, compared with the sophistical sciolists of the day. Bekker[1] in his summary of the argument treats it as an elucidation of that true beauty, which is the right object of human reason, and of language by which reason exerts itself. He terms it very properly in this point of view "mystical." And his idea is evidently drawn from the Alexandrian Platonists.

Stalbaum interprets it as an exposition of the truth that all rhetoric must be false and vain, which is not coupled with that true philosophy, from which all right reason must proceed[2].

Several manuscripts and Marsilius Ficinus inscribe it Περὶ Καλοῦ. And in the older catalogues of the Dialogues given by Laertius and borrowed by Fabricius and Petit from the arrangements of Thrasyllus and Aristophanes, the only information to be obtained is, that it may either be ranged in the third Tetralogy as an ethical work on Love, or be thrown into the heap of refuse dialogues, which, according to Aristophanes, were to be taken one by one, and without order, καθ' ἓν καὶ ἀτάκτως[3], as impossible to be reduced into any of the regular trilogies. It must be confessed that none of these accounts are very satisfactory clues to the labyrinth of this singular work. And if it is to be considered, as even from the earliest time some critics did consider it[4], the first of the dialogues, and the vestibule through which we are to pass into the interior of the noblest temple ever raised by mere human reason to truth and goodness, we must not complain at a strange mixture of surprise, and disgust, and admiration connecting itself with the student's first entrance on the Platonic philosophy, especially if he enters without a guide.

[1] Plat. Oper. vol. i. p. 2.
[2] Stalbaum, Præf. ad Phæd. p. 18.
[3] Laert. Vit. Plat. p. 21.
[4] Ibid.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE first view which a young reader takes of it is probably something like the following. It opens with an amusing little conversation between Socrates and Phædrus, of which the drift may be easily overlooked, and which is apparently a mere superfluous by-play. It then proceeds to a speech assigned indeed to the orator Lysias, but introduced by Plato, which professes to be a grave and elaborate recommendation of the most atrocious crimes in the grossest form—that of cold-blooded, dispassionate sensuality, carried on upon calculations of expediency. It is followed by a speech of Socrates on the same subject, very different indeed in tendency, but treating it with a strange mixture of levity, and florid inflated attempts at poetical prose, very unlike the grave indignation and abhorrence to be expected from a philosopher and moralist. Then occurs a long and wild allegorical myth, bordering, as Socrates himself confesses, on dithyrambic writing, and raising a sort of phantasmagoric-show, relating to the immortality of the soul, its state after death, Plato's intellectual world of ideas, and the spiritual beings that range between it and the earth; and all this mixed up with a dialectical classification of different kinds of madness, a fanciful theory of the origin of our sense of beauty, and a rather coarse picture of the human soul struggling between passion and duty. After this singular but striking melo-dramatic scene, the dialogue sinks quietly down into a tranquil inquiry into the proper principles of rhetoric, and closes with an

Egyptian fable on the mischievous effects of the art of writing.

Such is something like the general impression left by a first and superficial perusal of the Phædrus.

The view which it is proposed to take of it here, and which to be correct must throw together all these seemingly incoherent features into a natural and satisfactory outline, is to be found generally in some previous observations on the character of Plato's writings. It is not a mere jeu d'esprit, as some suppose it to be; nor a mere metaphysical allegory, as it was interpreted by the Alexandrian school; nor an exercise in rhetoric and dialectics, as some later writers have endeavoured to represent it. It is a practical exhibition of the good and wise man commencing his grand undertaking to rescue the Athenian youth from their lost and degraded subjection to the fascinating corruptions of the sophists. This is the first and natural key to the cypher—Phædrus is the young man; Socrates the philosopher; and their characters are each beautifully etched out in a few fine but decided touches. And Hogarth, had he been capable of grand and pure conceptions, might have taken from Plato's sketch the first of a series of pictures on the reformation of a profligate.

To limit however either the intention of this dialogue or Plato's plan of ethical reform to insulated cases of individuals, would be very much to misrepresent the scope of his works, and the comprehensiveness of his mind. It would be to charge him with the same narrow, short-sighted views, with which too many Christian teachers in the present day address themselves to individuals as individuals, and endeavour to purify the mass of society by taking and trying to cleanse it atom by atom, without thinking of the great end of all such labours, and dealing with men as parts of a body, as members of the

Church. No such mutilation of our nature or of our duties is to be found in any part of Plato's system, as would separate ethics from politics, or permit us to consider man in any other light, than as necessarily and essentially, by the very constitution of his nature, a social being. Give Plato a state, and his first thought is to employ it in the education of individuals; give him an individual, and his ambition is to make him an instrument for forming a state. But a state or polity was the final end of his efforts, as it must be the end of every philosopher, whose mind can grasp the whole extent of man's moral relations, and comprehend his real powers and condition.

If the Phædrus, therefore, is a specimen of the moral teaching of Plato as addressed to an individual, it must also have a close connection with the Republic, in which the same Plato appears as the moral teacher and former of a whole people. There must be in both a reference to the same fundamental principles—an outline of the same system of truths,—highly coloured indeed and thrown out in myths, and figures, and personifications, and adorned with a profusion of beauties, when addressed to the taste of the young and vitiated Phædrus, and chastened into colder abstractions, when Plato appears as the companion of grave legislators discussing instead of enforcing the rules of virtue—but still substantially the same. And this is still more obvious, when we remember, that the whole plan of the Republic is formed upon the analogy which exists between the state and the individual. Every polity in the eyes of Plato, as in the eyes of every wise man, must be as one person. Every individual person has a polity or combination of powers within his own heart. His mind is a little kingdom. Each bears upon it the

"same inscription in the same letters [1], but in the one these letters are large, in the other small." This connexion between the education of the individual and the formation of a polity, is stated most strongly in the sixth book of the Republic [2], where he is speaking of the few minds that, under the existing state of government, could be saved from the general corruption, and preserved to devote themselves to philosophy. And, in using the word philosophy, let us not so mistake the word or Plato's views as to suppose that with him it meant a bare intellectual rationalism, and not the conversion of the whole soul from false and earthly objects to the knowledge of God [3]. *Ψυχῆς περιαγωγὴ ἐκ νυκτερινῆς τινὸς ἡμέρας εἰς ἀληθινὴν τοῦ ὄντος ἰούσης ἐπάνοδον, ἣν δὴ φιλοσοφίαν ἀληθῆ φήσομεν εἶναι.*

"Even of the few," says Socrates, "the very few spirits formed by nature for the study of philosophy, and devoted to it by choice—some left behind in the general flight, and abiding in it by the nobleness of their own instincts—some disdaining to engage in the affairs of a petty state—some raised up to follow it from a meaner art—some chained to it by sickness—or in a solitary case, it may be, checked" (like himself, Socrates,) "by a heavenly voice within—of these few, even he, who tastes and feels how blessed a possession it is, and who has seen the madness of the many—that not one sound act of one single individual can be found in public life—that not a single man exists with whom to ally himself in support of right, and to save his soul—that like a man fallen into a den of wild beasts, when he is neither willing to be accomplice in their crimes, nor able by his single arm to resist the fury of them all, before he can benefit his country or his friends he must perish, and all his plans of usefulness must perish with him—when these thoughts and these sights occur to him, all that he can do is to retire into

[1] Repub. lib. xi. p. 59. [2] Page 225. [3] Ibid. lib. vii. p. 256.

privacy, and never move beyond himself; and like a traveller in a storm, while dust and foam is swept past him by the whirlwind, to take shelter under some low wall, and when he sees all around him gorged and choked with sin, to bless his fate, if he himself may live in this life clear from iniquity and ungodliness, and may depart from it, when his hour arrives, at peace with himself and with his God.

"And such a man," is the reply, "would accomplish no slight work. Not a slight work," answers Socrates, "yet far from the greatest. The greatest he cannot achieve, unless aided by a suitable polity, *μὴ τυχὼν πολιτείας προσηκούσης*. . . .

"For of this wreck and ruin of noble minds, one great cause," he proceeds, "is this, that of all the forms of civil society around us, there is not one worthy of a philosophic mind. And therefore it turns and degenerates within them; and just as a foreign seed, sown in a strange soil, is overpowered and passes away into the weed of the country, so these minds, destitute of power within themselves, degenerate into an alien species. But if ever they should find, and take root in that best of polities, as they themselves are the best of natures, then will they show that wisdom is indeed a godlike work; and all things else but earthly, whether in minds or institutions."

This passage is interesting, not only as recognizing in Greek philosophy, as well as in Christianity, that Church principles, that is, principles of duty and affection towards a polity, under which we are governed, are absolutely necessary to the formation of our moral character; but it also shews, how Plato was looking to individuals, searching about Athens, as it were, to find any single person of talent, power, and natural goodness, who would assist him in his views—a Theages, an Alcibiades, a Theætetus, or even a Phædrus—in the conviction, as he himself expresses it, that[1] until either kings became philosophers, or philosophers kings, no state could be re-

[1] Repub. lib. vii. p. 282.

formed; and without such a reformation no goodness could be secured. His life, as well as his writings, confirm this view. His intercourse with Dion, his visits to Dionysius, and even the story so often quoted, that he had endeavoured to obtain from the latter a territory, on which he might realize his theory of a state [1], are the best interpretation of the views, with which, as said of Socrates in the Convivium [2], he addressed his "syren strains to individuals, fascinating young and old, woman and child," and avowing himself in the strong language of a passionate people, not merely the friend, but the ἐραστὴς [3] of the person, in whom he traced the seeds of virtue, and a capability of being won to his purpose. If but a few, if even a single man [4], could be raised from the sins and mean ambition of the day, he avowed his hope, that some reformation might be effected; and some approach be made to the establishment of his polity.

Without, however, entering farther at present into the important question of the connexion between ethics and politics, or the value and necessity of a Church, considered as an instrument of education, it is evident that the formation of such a Church could never be out of Plato's sight, when attempting to form the minds of individuals. And thus the principles employed in the Phædrus must be viewed as political as well as ethical, and will lead us for a fuller explanation of them to the Republic.

There is still a third view to be taken of the Phædrus. It exhibits dramatically in an example, not only the general principles of Plato's system of

[1] Laert. Vit. Plat. Bekker, p. 19, vol. i.
[2] Ibid. vol. vii. p. 272.
[3] Sympos. p. 216. 177; Meno, 76; Charmides, 157; Xenophon, Sympos. viii. 13.
[4] Repub. lib. vi. p. 232; lib. vii. p. 282.

education, but, as included in them, the principles of his written compositions, which were intended to be subservient to that his one great end. It is in this light a preface to the other dialogues, and a key to their structure. And, lastly, it must be not only possible but easy to interpret the work allegorically, as was the practice of the Alexandrian critics. It is probably presumptuous and false to assert that a mystical meaning was uppermost in Plato's mind, when he composed the Phædrus; or that it was a mere case and shell painted over with figures and hieroglyphics for the popular eye, while the real mysterious doctrines were wrapped up and embalmed within. The Disciplina Arcani, which is so generally assumed, as a distinguishing feature of Platonism, must be received with considerable caution. That a certain degree of reserve was practised by him in the communication of his doctrine is evident as a matter of fact, and may be inferred not only from the principles of education avowed by himself, but antecedently from the necessities of his position, as a reformer of morals, religion, and government, under the eye of that most jealous of tyrants, the Athenian mob. But to represent his written works as purely typical and symbolical, is an extravagance of fancy —very amusing, but by no means sound. To what an extent this was carried by the Alexandrian Platonists may be seen in the Commentaries of Hermeas[1]. With them every word and touch is an enigma. The opening question of Socrates, Ποῖ καὶ πόθεν; Whither and whence? becomes, in their eyes, a hint of the change and flux of all things in this visible world. Phædrus is the soul of man sunk in sense, and about to be raised by a spiritual aid to the con-

[1] They have been published by Ast in his edition of the Phædrus.

templation of the intellectual unity. If he is described as taking his walk out of the walls, it is to signify the escape of the mind from the dungeon of matter into a freer and purer region. If he sits the whole morning with Lysias, it is to indicate man's grovelling propensity to earth and earthly things. He carries a book hidden under his cloak to mark the darkness of the soul hidden from the light of truth, under the veil of sense. Socrates and himself cross the Ilyssus, that is, the material world with its fluent and transient phenomena. Socrates dips his foot in the water to hint that this world of matter should only be touched and sounded with the tips, as it were, of the fingers of the mind, that is, warily and fearfully with its external and least contemplative faculties. Socrates has no shoes, but Phædrus has, for the mind of Socrates is εὔλυτον, easy to be released from the chains of sense—ἀπέριττον, unencumbered with matter—εἰς ἀναγωγὴν ἐπιτήδειον, in a fit state to be extricated from earth and lifted up to a communion with the Deity; while Phædrus, on the other hand, is still entangled with the vanities of the flesh. So, also, in the description of the scene of the Dialogue, it is remarked, that Plato, in speaking of the "whispering breeze," the "cool river," and "the sloping bank," treats of the three elements—and that his enumeration of the plane tree, the withy, and the grass, contains a logical division of the species of the vegetable creation.

The first thought to a careless reader will be, that such a system of interpretation is wholly puerile and silly: Cousin [1], in referring to the Commentaries of Hermeas, from which the above specimens are extracted, would seem to think so likewise, at the same time that he allows much value to some of the meta-

[1] Œuvres de Plat.

physical comments of the same school. And it is indeed not very easy to draw the line where the sound analogy ends and the fanciful commences.

And yet there is something very remarkable in this application of allegory by the Neo-Platonicians, particularly when compared with the same mode of interpreting the Scriptures, as used by old Fathers of the Church, and instead of being entirely rejected without inquiry, it will deserve great consideration in another place.

At present we must adhere to the Dialogue itself.

CHAPTER XIV.

The best and only preparation for understanding its drift and structure is to be found, as was previously remarked, in the existing state of Athens, and especially in the tenets and influence of the Sophists. We must remember the command which they exercised over the young, their selfish sensual ethics, their ostentatious display of language, their sceptical or rather infidel metaphysics, the popular power, which they proposed, as the object of their education, and last to be here mentioned, though foremost among the recollections forced on us, while we study the Phædrus, a state of gross corruption and profligacy introduced by them into Athenian society, and especially into the relations of teacher and pupil, which happily in the present age it is scarcely possible to realize to our belief.

The Phædrus, however, brings us also into the midst of a peculiar class of men, very often confounded with the Sophists under the same name, and closely allied with them in principle, but distinguished from them in some important particulars, and well deserving a separate inquiry. We mean the Greek Rhetoricians. It is the rhetorical branch of the profession, which is attacked in the Phædrus. And as a rhetorician of the present day is a harmless, inoffensive specimen of our literary race, it may excite some surprise to see the genius of Plato selecting such an antagonist for its first battle. The rhetorician of Athens, however, was a very different personage from the authors, to whom in modern days we owe our philosophical theories of the principles of

eloquence. He was equally above those ingenious compilators of hard words, which, under the name of figures of speech, so tantalize unhappy schoolboys, by exhibiting the unbounded license allowed to writers in days of old, for altering and mutilating, and transposing and elongating, and using verbs for substantives, and substantives for verbs, and dispensing, in short, as they chose, with every rule of grammar, while in the present day every such sport of fancy, even under the stern necessity of an inexorable pentameter, is cut short and proscribed.

The Greek rhetorician was the original Sophist, curtailed by a natural process of those large and superfluous accomplishments, with which the first Sophists commenced their work of education, restricted to the one study of oratory, and installed as public professors in the universities of antiquity.

The beginning of this process is pointed out in the Phædrus. By what means it was carried on, so that all the pretensions of the first sophists ended in mere rhetoric, and yet rhetoric by itself was allowed to occupy nearly the whole field of education, deserves explanation; and the inquiry is not only necessary to enable us to understand Plato fully, but it is also interesting as leading us to a state of things, in which we may see realized certain projects of the present day for reforming the education in our English universities. The Sophists of London are very anxious to raise up a tribe of Sophists in Oxford and Cambridge. They wish to revive the character in many essential features of the Athenian rhetorician. Precisely the same principles, which have resuscitated a genuine sophistical school among ourselves, a school of sensualism in philosophy, of expediency in morals, of scepticism in reason, and of rationalism in religion, have suggested also the resuscitation of the same mode of instruction, and the same external

scholastic forms as prevailed among the original sophists at Athens. The history of these schools at their rise is comparatively little developed in contemporary authors. It is to be found principally in later Greek writers, who are not generally studied, as Eunapius, Philostratus, Maximus Tyrius, Themistius, Julian, Libanius and Synesius. And to these may be added St. Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. And although the system, of which these writers speak, was considerably later than the times of Plato, it is evidently the same in most essential features with that which Plato witnessed, and denounced in its first rise under the authority of Lysias. And it will be desirable to give a sketch of it at some length, not only as a necessary introduction to the Phædrus, but as the basis of a future arrangement of the Platonic Dialogues.

The history of Athenian education generally is very curious. It illustrates most strikingly the difficulty of providing even for the *instruction* of a people without a Church; and we shall probably see a repetition of the same problem in France before long, and perhaps even in this country, if the State succeeds in casting off the assistance of the Church, and undertakes to educate the nation by itself. A little grammar [1], a little music, and the exercises of the gymnasium, and most of these taught by slaves, was all the instruction originally ensured by the general system to the Athenian youth. An interesting and detailed account of it is given by Protagoras [2] in his conversation with Socrates. The child was placed at first under the care of a nurse, and a slave who acted as a sort of upper nursery-maid, παιδαγωγὸς, and attended him in his walks. He was then sent to a grammar school, εἰς διδασκάλων, where he learnt his

[1] Alcibiades, i.

[2] Protag. vol. ii. p. 160.

letters, and was "mounted upon the steps to read some of the best Grecian poems;" the moral influence of which, according to Protagoras, consisted in the virtuous precepts and exhortations contained in them, and their panegyrics of good men of old. From the grammar-school he passed to the music-master, κιθαριστὴς, who, upon the principle familiar to all who have read the Martinus Scriblerus of Pope, was to infuse harmony, and order, and sobriety into his soul, through melody and rhythm. He was also sent to the παιδοτρίβης, who discharged duties something like those of a drill-serjeant, and who was to discipline the body, as the music-master disciplined the soul. "And this," adds Protagoras, "was the education adopted by the richest men in Athens, who only were able to afford it; and their sons commenced their course earliest, and quitted it latest in life." He does indeed mention a still further education carried on after the young man had been released from his teachers. "The laws of the state," he says, "stand over him like the writing-master over the pupil, and compel his hand to move as it should move, and teach him to govern and be governed." But it requires little knowledge of human nature or Athenian history to comprehend the inefficacy of this last instrument for forming aright the mind of the young.

In all this system, it is to be observed, there is absolutely nothing which exercises the intellect. Memory, taste, and bodily strength, are the only faculties of which the improvement is attempted. The most jealous government might contemplate without alarm the utmost extension of such an education. And, accordingly, any scheme to interfere with or enlarge it was viewed with suspicion, as threatening not only the government as a government, but in an especial manner the democracy. No

higher and better principles, whether of religion, politics, or morals, could be introduced into the minds of the young, without endangering a political system made up of sensuality, self-will, and tyranny. This seems to have been the real cause, and not any sound attachment to an hereditary faith, which exposed so many of the philosophers of Greece to persecution. Anaxagoras was imprisoned and nearly stoned [1]—Protagoras was banished and his books burnt [2]—Aristotle was compelled to leave Athens—Diagoras was put to death—Damon ostracised—Socrates poisoned. "When a stranger," says Protagoras to Socrates [3], "comes into great cities, and, in these, endeavours to persuade the noblest and best of the youths to abandon the society of their countrymen, whether friends or strangers, old or young, and to live with him in the hope of becoming better by his communication; when he does this, he must be very cautious, for he is in great danger." And therefore, he proceeds, those who formerly undertook the task of education covered their real design under some inoffensive profession. Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides, called themselves poets. Orpheus and Musæus pretended to mysteries and rites. Some described themselves as professors of gymnastics, as Iccius of Tarentum, and Herodicus of Selymbrium. Agathocles, Pythoclides, and many others, affected to teach music. And Plutarch [4] says the same of Damon the instructor of Pericles.

Upon the same principle of guarding the state from innovation through a change of education, the Egyptians enforced that remarkable law mentioned in the Laws [5] of Plato, by which all sculptors and artists were prohibited from painting figures, except in particular postures, and from making the slightest alter-

[1] Euseb. Præp. Evang. xiv. 5. [2] Laertius.
[3] Protagor. p. 147. [4] Plut. Vit. Peric. [5] Lib. ii. p. 45.

ation in musical tunes. So also the Cretan as well as the Lacedemonian laws prohibited even the admission into the territory of a Sophist or rhetorician [1]. And in accordance with this principle Cephisophon was ejected from Sparta [2]. And the same jealousy extended to Rome, and led in a considerable degree at a much later period to the persecution of Christians.

Every government, in fact, from the tyrant in the one, to the tyrant in the many, is conservative—conservative, that is, of the state of things, under which it possesses power. Whether it be so from self-interest or upon principle it matters not. In each case the problem is to reconcile a general intellectual cultivation with the preservation of the state from the rashness and conceit of half-enlightened active thinkers. And few, if any, legislators seem to have attempted this, or even to have conceived it possible, until the Church came in and undertook to give increased light, activity, and independence to the mind of the governed, and at the same time to increase the stability of governments. It effected this by imposing additional moral restraint, and by opening a new field of thought where reason might expatiate, without temptations to vanity or discontent. It multiplied the power of the steam, but it also opened a safety-valve. It is proposed in the present day to discard the Church, and still to continue education. An enlightened self-interest is to supply the place of a moral check, instead of the fear of God. General knowledge, chiefly of physical facts, is to be the field now opened for the emancipated reason to range in; without fear of its intruding where it cannot be admitted with safety. We are about to take precisely the same step in advance to ruin, which was made at Athens by the first appearance of the foreign sophists.

[1] Plut. in Lyc. [2] Plut. in Lacon. Inst.

And if all history were not a succession of parallels, it might surprise us to see the similarity, or rather identity of the principles, upon which both Athens was, and England is, tempted to alter her system of education. Only let us remember that Athens had an excuse, England has none. Athens had no intellectual education, nothing at least worthy of the name. England possesses her Church, and her Church has been for centuries not only the great depository of her knowledge, but the strong lever, with which the public mind from the lowest class to the highest has been roused to constant activity, and roused with safety.

But the principle of the change proposed was the same both in Athens and in England, and if we wish to realize days gone past by facts before our eyes, we may imagine Mr. Protagoras and Mr. Gorgias, accompanied by Messrs. Polus, Prodicus, and Hippias, as a deputation from the Central Society of Sophists, waiting on the chief secretary of the Athenian Demus, at his office in Pnyx Street, and stating their views and proposals for founding a new University in much the same language which is now conveyed to us through a London newspaper. They would expatiate on the general ignorance of the people, on the defects of existing schools, and the want of range and freedom for the intellect, where attention was almost exclusively given to ancient poets and moral training. They would talk largely [1], as both Protagoras and Gorgias talked (and we have little reason to suppose dishonestly) on justice and virtue; on the necessity of enlightened views of right and wrong as conducive to happiness and misery; on the value of knowledge; on the possibility of the general diffusion both of virtue and wisdom [2]; on the facility of making men

[1] See Protagoras, p. 150, &c.; Gorgias, vol. iii. p. 16. 18.
[2] Protagoras, p. 156.

good by instruction ; or, in the phrase so common in Plato's words, *ἀρέτην διδακτὸν εἶναι*; and on the necessary connection between government and education [1]. And even on the subject of religion they would speak without irreverence as a proper becoming thing, if not carried to excess, nor terminating in narrow-minded restrictions upon reason, or in exclusive privileges [2]. If it was objected that knowledge by itself was a dangerous thing, they would argue that so also was bodily strength. And yet, Gorgias would say [3], " we teach men to box, and wrestle, and fence, though it is possible that they may employ their powers to knock down their fathers, or stab their mothers." And the prayer of the petition would then come that they might be allowed to remain in the city, and establish their new scheme of education —*οὐ τὸν διδάξαντα δεῖ μισεῖν τε καὶ ἐκβάλλειν ἐκ τῶν πόλεων* [4]."

It is not difficult either to imagine considerations, which might relax and lull even the jealous vigilance of the functionary above mentioned, if large and pompous promises were made by really clever and ingenious men. And in such promises and professions the Sophists abounded. They were to make men good citizens—*ἀγαθοὺς πολίτας* [5]; they gave the benefit of their society to young men from their regard to virtue—*τὸ ἐπαγγελλόμενον ὡς ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα τὰς ὁμιλίας ποιούμενοι* [6]; and they were the only teachers of virtue—*μόνοι διδάσκαλοι ἀρετῆς* [7]. That they would make men wise was implied in their very name. They went farther, and according to Isocrates claimed all but immortality—*μόνον οὐκ ἀθανάτους εἶναι.*

Again, these proposals would seem fair, if there was something really deficient in the existing state of

[1] Protagoras, p. 156. [2] Ibid. p. 155.
[3] Gorgias, vol. iii. p. 16. [4] Ibid. p. 17.
[5] Protagoras. [6] Sophist. [7] Meno, Euthydemus.

education; if opinions of the day happened to be rather lax on the value of ancient institutions, and the danger of innovation; if the principles of the sophistical system, instead of opposing, favoured and seemed likely to diffuse the principles of the party then in power—if they established, that is, a theory, which naturally flowed out in practice into the unlimited right of conscience, universal suffrage, the downfal of establishments, and civil and religious liberty all over the world, while it protested at the same time against carrying itself out to a *dangerous* extent, and professed largely a reverence for prudence and order.—Some weight might also be given to the popular voice, applauding the new accomplishments—to the rich patrons, and amateur pupils of the foreign professors —to the thought of the popular orators, and the voters in the Athenian House of Commons, who were likely to be raised up by the new education, and inspired by its means with liberal sentiments. And especially if the opponents of the new system were also the opponents of the reigning democracy—and very troublesome opponents; powerful by their connection with old and still reverenced institutions, and by their active zeal and talent, it would not be a subject for wonder, if eyes were closed for a time to final consequences, and Gorgias, Protagoras, and the rest, were formally incorporated and chartered as a Society for the Diffusion of all Useful Knowledge, with the single exception of religion.

The reader, who will turn to the commencement of Plato's Protagoras, will see how these remarks come in to explain the rather sudden transition from the old system of Athenian education to the new. And they will understand the complacency, not unmixed with surprise and alarm, with which Protagoras himself looks round, as he finds himself formally installed, and recognized in his new office of instructor of the

Athenian youth—a complacency not perhaps unlike the feeling, which must have played on the faces of the first council assembled within the walls of the London University College.

And if these observations seem to run too close a parallel between ancient and modern days, let it be remembered that there is still, we may thank God, in this country, a class of men, with whom history is not an old almanack—and history, let it be repeated again, is composed of a series of parallels; and we are at this time in this country descending through the same stages into the same depths with the Athenian people. The evils and wretchedness of their end it has pleased a merciful Providence to reveal to us by eye-witnesses. And we make an unworthy use of the great writers of Greece, who almost without exception raised their voice for the very purpose of testifying against the follies of their day, unless we listen to them as the prophets of nature set there to warn us from the like.

CHAPTER XV.

THE first phase of the sophistical education was its profession of universal knowledge. "Veteres illi," says Cicero [1], "usque ad Isocratem omnem omnium rerum, quæ ad mores hominum, quæ ad vitam, quæ ad virtutem, quæ ad rempublicam pertinent, cognitionem et scientiam cum dicendi ratione jungebant." Arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, grammar, criticism, dancing in armour, logic, politics, military tactics, œconomics, and rhetoric, besides all arts and crafts of whatever kind, occur in Plato as part of their encyclopædic instruction. Παν*επιστημοσύνη φιλοσοφική* is the term used by Dionysius Halicarnassus;—*τὸ τῶν σοφιστῶν γένος*, says Maximus Tyrius [2], *τὸ πολυμαθὲς τοῦτο, καὶ πολύλογον, καὶ πολλῶν μεστὸν μαθημάτων*—and the same boast was continued to a very late date. It was maintained by the later sophists, or heretics of Gregory Nazianzen's days [3], who alike claimed *πάντα εἰδέναι τε καὶ διδάσκειν λίαν νεανικῶς καὶ γενναίως*, to know and teach every thing in a very spirited and high-minded way. We cannot wonder that these animated encyclopædias should have made a great impression on young men at any time; on the young men of Athens especially, born as they were with natural activity of genius, drilled from their infancy to the songs of a few Greek poets, a little lifeless grammar, and the strains of a harper, of which perhaps we may form the fittest notion by recalling,

[1] De Orat. lib. iii. [2] Dissert. xvi. [3] Or. xxxiii. p. 530.

if we can, to our memory the inspiring tones of a dancing-master's violin; and which perhaps derived but few additional charms from the grave and moral lessons, which were intended to be conveyed through its strings. General knowledge is, in fact, one of the greatest snares and temptations of a young active-minded man. Even in the best regulated understanding question opens question, and all the lines of study run into each other by so many tempting by-paths, that scarcely any thing is more difficult than to confine the mind to one subject, and pursue it to the end. To this is added the weariness of continually following one object, and the assistance often derived to our main subject from the accidental digressions, which enable us to see it in a new light. But the principal temptation is vanity. And the more the means of communication between man and man are multiplied, and we are taught to live for society instead of for God and our own improvement, the more this vanity will be fostered. It would be well to impress upon young men of the present day the value of ignorance, as well as the value of knowledge; to give them fortitude and courage enough to acknowledge that there are books which they have not read, and sciences which they do not wish to learn; and to make them feel that one of the very greatest defects of mind is want of unity of purpose; and that every thing which betrays this, betrays also want of resolution and energy. It is painful for those who are watching the state of education to observe in the present day a tendency to revive the old sophistical error. Even the University of Oxford, sound as her principles are in theory, is not free from this error in practice. Instead of limiting her students to particular studies during the several portions of their residence, by fixing examinations at certain intervals, she allows them to wander over history, philology,

philosophy and theology, for four years, and at the end they are called on to produce their budget. It is unnecessary to describe the probable result. With the exception of the very few who have strength of mind enough to impose upon themselves the restraint, which should be imposed on all by the University, or who have been been rightly directed by the system of their colleges, which is in fact only an accident, the rest too often diverge at will from one subject to another, picking up at random facts and theories, grammar and metaphysics, without interest to follow up any train of inquiry, or time, as they suppose, to think on what they read; and at the end their medley is discharged into the examiner's lap, much as an expansive carpet-bag is emptied at the end of a long and hurried journey. It is true that history, and philology, and philosophy, and divinity, should all have a place in a preparatory education, which is to form generally good habits of mind; and it is this very combination which forms one of the most distinguishing excellences in the Oxford system; but in the study of them they should be kept distinct. And the only mode of securing this would be to divide the examinations, and spread them over the four years, and thus allow the student to pursue them separately and undistracted. The Oxford plan is free in other respects from any sophistical taint; and in this instance the evil seems to have arisen more from a delay in perfecting in all its parts a system commenced upon trial, than from any principle; and therefore it may the sooner be remedied. But a remedy is undoubtedly required.

Beyond the walls of Oxford the evil lies more, it may be seen, in the clamour for universal knowledge, than in the pursuit of it. In the present state of society men are taken up as soon as they leave the university, and tied down to some one profession.

Few have the leisure or means to dissipate their minds in a variety of studies; and those few are not worth much anxiety. It is by changing the system of education that the sophistical principle will take effect, if it prevails generally in this country. And the only way to resist it, is by diffusing right views of our intellectual powers, and placing all their operations under the control of Christian duty. We must show men that he who knows a little of many things can know much of none,—that it is deep knowledge, and deep knowledge only, which can command respect or ensure usefulness,—that power of mind, not accumulation of learning, faculties not facts, are the real object of instruction;—and that this power is more a moral patience, and control over the thoughts, than an instinctive readiness in combining ideas,—that it is dissipated and destroyed by indulging every caprice of thought, and by giving way to each temptation of knowledge, instead of rigidly maintaining one definite course. If they say that the use of reason is to generalize and extend our views, and that this can only be done by comprehending a variety of subjects, remind them that such high generalizations are only to be obtained by following *one* course of thought to its fountain-head, not by striking off into many. The lines of knowledge all converge as they ascend. And there is indeed a point, which the greatest intellects have struggled to reach, from which all knowledge radiates, and may all be comprehended at a view. But this region of abstractions, the "philosophia prima" of all philosophies, lies at the top of a mountain, not scattered about along its roots and sides. And any one ascent steadily followed will bring us to it at last.

Sir Isaac Newton's falling apple led him to the revolutions of the planets and the most abstract laws of motion; and Bishop Berkeley's tar-water carried

him through the whole range of Greek philosophy up to the analysis of unity and being.

But the practical check to this dissipation of the mind among a multiplicity of subjects is to be found in the Church. Men smile, some incredulously, some in contempt, when they hear the Church thus brought forward as the panacea for all the evils of man's nature. And yet if the Church be the one great work of God,—if it be the end of ends, the legislature of legislatures, the great incorporation of all societies into one Catholic form, and under one head,—a philosopher need not be surprised that in this should also be found the law and motive for regulating aright *all* the movements both of our hearts and understanding. It was a wise principle of the old monastic institutions that each man was to have his own work, not to be taken up or left without the command of the Superior. Let men remember that in the same manner[1] they are under the command of the Church, are her servants to fulfil her work—that this work is sure of completion because it is in the hands of God, and therefore they need not fret about in a vain bustle, as if nothing could be done without an interference from themselves;—let them take the peculiar talent, or the bias impressed upon their mind as a notification from their Creator, of the one task which he appoints them to fulfil—let them, if pride is to be indulged in the accumulation of knowledge, take pride in the accumulations of the whole body, in which they have all a share, as every separate limb partakes of the general health;—and let them learn that no accumulation whatever can take place except by a subdivision of labour, and an inequality in employments. "You ask me," says Plato[2], "why I condemn the best and noblest minds

[1] Repub. lib. vii. 254. [2] Ibid. lib. vii. 253.

to sacrifice themselves to inferior labours? I do it because I am forming a body, looking to the good of a body, and the perfection of the whole cannot be attained without inequality of the parts." "If the whole body were an eye," says St. Paul[1], "where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."

[1] 1 Corinth. xii. 17.

CHAPTER XVI.

From this digression (and yet the study of ancient philosophy or history is of little use without such applications to ourselves) we must return to the Athenian Sophists, and their course of education.

The first change, which appears to have taken place in the Sophistical school, was from this pretence of general information to a captious, disputatious logic. From pantological, if we may use the word, it became eristic. It is not intended by this latter word to speak of that particular section of Greek philosophy which, according to common statements, was founded by Euclid of Megara, and passed from him through Eubulides, Alexinus, Euphantus, Cronus of Apollonia, and Diodorus Cronus, till it expired with Stilpo [1]. That the Eristic school, properly so called, might be considered a lineal descendant from that of the Sophists, is well known. Euclid, its founder, was a pupil of Gorgias; and Dionysius [2], Aristotle [3], Arrian [4], Diogenes, and Suidas, all state the fact more or less distinctly. But historians of philosophy too often make the same mistake in classifying the Greek schools, which physiologists make in classifying animals. It is impossible to draw lines distinctly between them. Their characters form, as it were, in circles entering into each other, instead of ranging in a series of derivative parallel lines. And I only wish here to mark the peculiar features successively assumed by the low, arrogant,

[1] Brucker, Hist. Pars II. s. 11, c. iv.
[2] In Isocr.
[3] De Sophist. Elench. c. ult.
[4] Epictet. lib. iii. c. 5.

falsely-so-called philosophy, which undertook the task of providing a new education for the Athenian people.

The first change took place as follows. It is evident that when the teacher professes to know everything, the pupil stands a fair chance of learning nothing. For the comprehensive genius of a Gorgias and a Hippias is not common, and universal knowledge is not capable of universal diffusion. Hence it became necessary with the Sophist, while he made a magnificent display of his own omnigenous information, to select some one talent, which could be made over to all students alike—made over in a few lessons without practice, and preserved by a sort of technical memory. This talent was also to be something captivating, if not practically useful, to the generality of minds. Rhetoric, as an instrument of commanding the people, was indeed a tempting ware; but there were few, who could hope to wield the thunders of Pericles; and "as a single bush cannot hold two thieves[1]," the Athenian democracy could not support more than one orator at a time. And even with all the aid of a Gorgias, eloquence cannot be taught in a few lectures to all classes of minds. But there was another use of language of every-day occurrence, in which the most ignorant might be easily initiated, which offered amusement as well as business, and promised, if not the glories of the rostrum, the more intelligible triumph of puzzling and perplexing, beyond the chance of extrication, every one who could be inveigled into an exchange of conversation. Stranger or countryman, father or mother, clown or philosopher, guests at a feast, idlers in the forum, loungers in the baths—man, woman, or child—all were to be subjected to the conquest of this new

[1] Aristoph. Vespæ.

machine of *wrangling*. It consisted of a variety of sophisms, properly so called; armed with which the young student proceeded to the places where that nation of idle gentlemen without trade or business, the Athenian people, met to pass the day in the indulgence of taste, or the exercises of contention. Beauty and action were the two paramount objects of Athenian admiration. They occupied his whole mind. Hence rivalry of whatever kind was their favourite amusement. "Contentionis avidiores quam veritatis[1]." From the rival dramas on the stage, to the pugilists in the arena—from the plaintiff and defendant in a law-suit, to the struggles of political parties throughout the whole of Greece—from the propounder of riddles at the supper-table, to the battle of demagogues on the rostrum—from the fighting-cocks which they carried about in their bosoms[2], to the pair of grave philosophers sitting on the stone benches in the exercising-ground, surrounded by a gaping crowd, with head peering above head, and eager listeners in the far back-ground stretching themselves out to catch the sounds of disputation[3]—every thing was contest. But this contest of rival wits was the exhibition most attractive. And while each new-invented puzzle retained its freshness, the interest of the conflict, and the glory of the victory, were unabated; and the Sophists never wanted pupils, who were content to pay largely for instruction in the intellectual game. Aristotle[4] and other writers have preserved to us the names and nature of some of these "fallacies," "quibbles," "snares," "hooks," "labyrinths," "nooses," "nets," "instruments of mental torture," "juggleries,"

[1] Cicero de Orat. lib. i. [2] Plat. de Leg. vi.

[3] See the beginning of the Euthydemus, which is the dialogue devoted by Plato to the eristic sophist and the Philebus, p. 150.

[4] De Sophist. Elench.

"rogueries," "traps," and "stumbling-blocks," or by whatever other name they occur to us in ancient writings, which even the grave Gregory of Nyssa condescends to call formidable and inextricable, φοβερὰ καὶ ἄφυκτα ; and Aristotle himself confesses to have vanquished even the wisest. Puck "lurking in the gossip's bowl, or toppling down a wise old aunt in the shape of a three-legged stool," was not more mischievously sportive or more full of triumph than the young Sophist armed with a new fallacy. There was the Crocodile, the Nobody, the Electra, the Horns, the Do-nothing, the Liar, the Covered Head, the Dominant, the Bald-pate, the Heap of Sand, the Tumbler, and a variety of others, each dignified with the name of their author—Eubulides, or Corax, or Chrysippus, or Zeno, who condescended to invent these intellectual toys for full-grown children, just as Sir David Brewster would construct a kaleidoscope or magic lantern. The first person who made his appearance was seized on, and compelled to answer some simple, self-evident question. One word led to another; statement was drawn out after statement; the eye of the querist became quicker and quicker, the smile lurking about his mouth warned the poor innocent victim that something was going wrong, till the final stroke was ready, and he found himself planted in an absurdity, amidst a roar of laughter from the by-standers, and shouts of applause to the querist, among which he went off in triumph to surprise and lay prostrate some new antagonist[1]. And let us not suppose that this was only an Athe-

[1] For a clever and spirited analysis of the Euthydemus of Plato, the Dialogue, as before stated, devoted to the illustration of the eristic sophistry, see Mr. Mitchell's Introduction to the Clouds of Aristophanes, p. 54. But Mr. Mitchell seems to regard it merely as a jeu-d'esprit, and not to be aware of its practical bearing on the object of Plato's writings generally.

nian game. The same kind of amusement, though under rather a graver form, constituted for many years the chief exercise and study of our modern universities. The old scholastic disputations were a revival of the Eristicism of Greece, and in Cambridge the term Wranglers still preserves significantly the nature of the original custom. Minds exercised their powers by battling with each other. And although our northern natures are not so full of the spirit of rivalry as the Athenian, nor so well furnished with that peculiar talent for following on the reasoning of others—*σύνεσις*—without which there can be little interest in standing by to witness this play of intellect; it still formed a large part not only of our graver studies, but even of relaxation. If a royal visitor was entertained at Oxford, he went, we are told by Antony Wood, two or three times in the day to hear solemn disputations in the schools. But not content with this, the after-dinner recreation was still the same, and two masters or two doctors were picked out to battle over the wine on some frivolous problem for the amusement of the company.

It is worth while to remark the date of this revival of Eristicism or wrangling in modern Europe. Here, as in Athens, it synchronised with the spread of lax licentious principles, and that movement of human wilfulness which led to the admixture of much evil with the Reformation, and its consequences. It marks the transition from a sound system of education, in which truths are conveyed by the teacher, and the pupil's mind is exercised indeed, but with a view chiefly to receive them aright, into an unsound system, in which the teacher ceases to be regarded as the depository of knowledge, and the pupil is trained to seek it independently for himself; and, as must be the case upon such a principle, is taught habitually to distrust every thing, to dispute instead of believing,

to strip his antagonist of errors, instead of clothing himself with truth. It will be sufficient, in addition, to point out to the young reader, first, that this practice of wrangling gave rise to that strict formal logic, or rules of argumentation, without which the sophistical fallacies could not be detected, and which was not invented as an instrument for discovering truth, but as a form or framework on which an argument might be stretched for the purpose of more conveniently examining it;—and secondly, that the Platonic dialectics were apparently constructed with immediate reference to this fondness of the Athenians for such exercises of the intellect. It was to aid in refuting the sophists, while it indulged the national taste. *Ὥσπερ καθαρτικὸν φάρμακον* is the term applied to it by Plutarch in making the same observation [1].

[1] Plut. Quæst. Platon.

CHAPTER XVII.

It is evident that the art of wrangling could not by itself maintain the school of sophistry in power for any long time. It was a game only, and a game soon played, and when played often, not a little wearisome. But there was another ware, which they exhibited for sale, of more permanent demand, even more glittering, and absolutely necessary to all Athenians—the art of rhetoric. This, indeed, was placed prominently forward in the general bazaar of the first sophists, and to it the art of wrangling was made subservient. But by degrees it assumed the entire pre-eminence, and became almost exclusively the business of one great part of the profession.

In all popular governments oratory must carry great weight, because there is a singular passion in common minds for hearing themselves addressed in set speeches. Something of this is experienced among ourselves. But the Athenian constitution was the concentrated essence of democracy; and the demands made by it on the tongues of its subjects were proportionably increased. So far, indeed, as oratory was required to obtain popular influence, it might be safely neglected by all those, who were too proud or too timid to venture on the rostrum, or who had no desire with Gorgias[1] "to have the judges in the court, and the council in the council-chamber, and the assemblies in the Pnyx, and in every other meeting all the persons present under their command; so that the physician should yield his art, and the schoolmaster his ferule,

[1] Gorgias, p. 10, vol. iii.

and the merchant his money, up to the orator whose tongue could manage the people;" or, in the rather stronger language of Polus[1], "who were content without being tyrants, or exhibiting the power of their oratory in killing, plundering, and banishing from the city all whom they chose." But besides the mob in the assembly who were to be solaced by sweet sounds, there were other mobs in the courts of law [justice, we had written], with ears equally itching, and hearts quite as open to passion, flattery, or pleasure. And from these there was no escape. No privacy of life, no innocence[2], no abstinence from public business (*ἀπραγμοσύνη*), not even poverty, could guarantee an Athenian gentleman in the land of liberty from being dragged at any moment before a tribunal of his fellow-townsmen, and there compelled to plead his own cause *in person*, with fines, imprisonment, and death staring him in the face; and neither laws, oaths, evidence, nor records affording him any solid ground, on which to rest his defence. Informers surrounded him on all sides. If offences had been committed, there were the public accusers. If none, there were personal enemies, or the enemies of his father, or a political partizan, or a new fledged orator, anxious to try his wings, or a hungry sycophant, or a needy politician, ready to seize upon him, to suborn witnesses, to falsify documents, to cajole, and threaten, and pander to the judges—any thing to work his ruin. We have used the term judge; but the merest tyro in Greek history knows how sadly such a title, almost sacred in the ears of Englishmen, is prostituted by its application to the needy, jealous, half-starved, and profligate old men who gathered themselves in swarms like wasps[3] into the court-houses of Athens, and sat there day after day to earn

[1] Gorgias, p. 30. [2] Lys.—Pro Calliâ, p. 48.
[3] Aristoph. Vesp.

a miserable pittance, doled out for services done, like wages from a poor rate, and to vent their spleen or caprice upon the heads of all who came before them.

It is a subject trite and hackneyed to every scholar. And an Athenian trial-case offers at first sight little to connect it with philosophy or theology. But there is a practical theology contained in history, even in heathen history, as well as in the Bible; and not even the last chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy, awful as the burden of them is, contain to a thoughtful mind more pregnant denunciations of a Providence, than the state of the Athenian democracy abandoned to its own lusts and passions. We have been accustomed in this country for many years (perhaps some unhappy change has taken place of late) to regard law as the basis of our freedom, and our courts of law as the most venerable and sacred of our civil institutions. The administration of justice with us has been perfected by degrees, each age adding something to secure it more from partiality, and to give it greater efficacy and equity. For these purposes it has been detached from the executive, and made superior to any single branch of the legislature. The judges have been rendered independent in point of income, and venerable by titles and dignities. Their fitness for such an office is guaranteed, as far as may be, by the rules of their appointment. Their decisions are secured from personal caprice or prejudice by the principles of prescription, and by the rigid enforcement of written laws. They are few, and therefore not exposed to that contagion of passion so common in large bodies of men; and their movements are tied up and directed by a multitude of forms and usages, constructed for the especial purpose of giving to truth and justice the advantage over wrong. Such has been the direction taken in the gradual formation of our English Law Courts. In Athens it was just the reverse. Step by

step they were released from restraints, blended with the executive, lowered in dignity, multiplied in number, thrown open to the lowest of the people, entrusted not only with the interpretation, but virtually with the enactment of laws, and from a bulwark for the subject against the excesses of government, converted into an iron hand, by which, without odium, and with absolute power, the demagogue of the day might wreak his vengeance, or the public purse be replenished by fines and confiscations. It must be unnecessary to refer for these facts to the Greek orators, and especially to the Wasps of Aristophanes, which is the most perfect development of the system. The Athenian Dicasts were, in fact, the supreme power in the state—armed with all the dangerous weapons of such a power, but stript of the redeeming advantages which mitigate or control it;—they were needy, low born, ignorant; impotent in themselves, and yet omnipotent in the hands of the Cleon of the day. And against this corrupt, wayward, feeble yet sanguinary tyrant, there was but one security, one charm, to appease his passion—the art of speaking.

That we may realize to ourselves the circumstances, under which this demand for oratory was made, let us transfer the scene from Athens to one of our own country towns of about the same size, and erect the body of municipal electors, increased by the scot and lot voters, into a court for trying all offences committed within the borough. Then relieve them from any superintendence of the Court of Queen's Bench, and control of the statutes of the land. Nothing is to limit their decisions but their own bye-laws. Place the date at the time of a contested election. Give the courts summary power of fining, imprisoning, banishing, or killing; only if the fines are inflicted, let them go into the pockets of the judges. Fix a daily stipend for those who choose to attend. Hoist a flag to sum-

mon together the idle, the needy; men with starving wives and children at home, or who vary the duties of the session with parading the streets in mobs under banners of liberty and reform. Let them be exasperated in court and out of court by perpetual representations of the atrocities, tyranny, and conspiracies of the opposite party. Appoint them to sit by lot, and let their votes be given by ballot. Then provide a number of clever active attornies to lay informations, and harangue the court, and a Cleon to set them on their prey,—and you have all the circumstances needed for reproducing upon English ground the image of the Athenian judicature. One thing, indeed, was omitted, an offender to be tried. And how long a time would elapse before a conservative alderman, *παχὺς καὶ μισόδημος* [1], would be produced at the bar, we leave the reader to imagine. But place him there, and insist on his making his own defence without benefit of counsel, and if he escaped at all, his first visit, not improbably, on leaving the court would be to some friendly Sophist, who would prepare him either by writing speeches for him, or by lessons in rhetoric and logic, for the many future appearances, which awaited him. It would be easy, if there were time, to amuse ourselves with compiling from the Greek orators a speech embodying the principles of persuasion, by which such judges would be swayed. "If you are to judge aright," says Lysias, (and as he is the orator selected in the Phædrus, we may confine ourselves to him,) "put yourselves, gentlemen, in my place; imagine yourselves to have been injured as I have been [2]." "Do as you like, for you are the absolute lords and masters of all things in the town [3]." "Be not swayed by argument or evidence, but look

[1] Aristoph. Vesp. [2] De Cæd. Eratos. p. 1. Leipzig edit.
[3] De Cæd. Erat. p. 10.

at the many kindnesses, which you have received from the party before you [1]." "The prisoner is charged with murder; perhaps, indeed, this cannot be proved; but then he committed a theft ten years ago, and that is enough [2]." "Have compassion, and acquit us, for we voted against the Aristocrats in the last election;" a fact fully as important in the eyes of a town council as an attack upon the thirty tyrants was to the Athenian mob [3]. "I charge this man, indeed, with a public offence; but, I avow it, my real motive is a deadly animosity against him ever since his father and mine had a law-suit together [5]." "Condemn him, and condemn him to death; show your resentment as you ought, otherwise you will be thought to agree with the opposite party, who acquitted him [6]." "He is a Conservative, and an Aristocrat, and an enemy to the rights of the people; punish him as your enemy and mine now he is in your power [7]." "If you acquit him, it will be thought that you care nothing for the party which supports you [8]." "Do not rest on the offence now charged; take his whole life into consideration; follow him from his infancy till now, and see how much he has done to insult and injure you [9]." "Think what a blessing it will be to rid the town of such men [10]." "Look at us. Are we not Radicals like yourself? Have we not always voted with you; how can you vote against us [11]?" "We know you are suspicious of all orators. We are but plain blunt men, with no powers of speech, nothing to deceive you [12]." "Be not misled, gentlemen, by the state-

[1] Lys.—Pro Calliâ, p. 50.
[2] Cont. And. p. 56.
[3] Accus. Theomnesti, p. 89.
[4] Cont. Alcib. p. 141.
[5] Cont. Erat. In Trigint. Tyr. p. 93.
[6] De Agorat. p. 140.
[7] Ibid. p. 117.
[8] Cont. Erat. p. 113.
[9] Cont. Alcib. p. 147.
[10] Alcib. p. 152.
[11] Adv. Poliar. p. 165.
[12] De Pub. Crim. p. 161.

ments and reasonings which you have heard this day, but recollect what you have heard and seen out of court[1]." "If the witnesses swear to facts, do you think only if they were likely[2]." "We intreat your compassion for the defendant; for his father spent all his money in giving away beer to the people[3]." "If he is charged with embezzlement, yet consider what vast expenses he has incurred in supporting the cause of his party; so much for ribands at elections; so much for local charities; so many subscriptions to mechanics' institutes. Do not inquire too rigidly into the nature of his income; he holds it in trust for you. And it will fructify far better in his pockets than in the public exchequer."—*τῶν ἐμῶν ἐγὼ πολὺ βελτίων ὑμῖν ἔσομαι ταμίας τῶν τὰ τῆς πόλεως ὑμῖν ταμιευόντων*[4].

We must not, however, trespass farther. In this sketch there is nothing new, or which is not familiar to all scholars. But I am writing principally for those who are not masters of the real state of Athens, and who are likely to be blinded by those dreams of past purity and happiness, as delusive as the dreams of future profit, both of which, as may be remembered, were brought forward on the occasion of the Greek loan to stimulate the English appetite for a renewal of an Athenian system both at Athens and at home.

It is needless to point out the importance of the art of speaking under such a state of things. It was not only the instrument, by which the worse was made to appear the better cause, through the ordinary artifices of perplexing the judgment, and exciting the passions; but the speeches formed no small part of the perquisites of the judges. They sat and listened as spectators in the theatre, and no road to their

[1] Pro Bon. Aristoph. p. 184. [2] Plato.
[3] Pro Bon. Aristoph. p. 183. [4] De Crimin. Largit. p. 198.

favourable decision was so easy, as through their taste and fancy. "They tell us stories (says the old Dicast in the play) when they are brought to trial [1], or some laughable fable of Æsop's. And others jest and jeer that I may laugh and relent. And when Æagrus (the famous tragic actor) is brought to the bar, we never acquit him till he has picked out and recited the finest speech in the Niobe; and if a flute-player is acquitted, he pays us with a tune on his instrument as we go out of the court." So also Demosthenes [2]—"You permit," says he, "the greatest criminals to escape, if they only utter one or two clever things, ἂν ἓν ἢ δύο ἀστεῖα εἴπωσι; or if you are persuaded to condemn them, you fine them only five and twenty drachmas." And thus it is that we are to account for the care and finish bestowed even on the temporary speeches furnished by the rhetoricians to the parties who were called on to plead, and which were even the more elaborately wrought in the style, in order to compensate for a probable defect in the delivery.

[1] Aristoph. Vesp. 578.

[2] Page 689, 6.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The mention of these written speeches in judicial rhetoric brings us now to another stage of the sophistical school; and one which is especially dwelt upon in the Phædrus. This was the introduction of a written popular literature into Greece. And it formed a remarkable æra, analogous to the invention of printing in modern days, or rather to the introduction of novel writing, penny magazines, and family libraries. Accustomed as we are to the swarms of books that now issue out, month by month, from the press, we can scarcely realize to ourselves the state of a people without them. At Athens originally, as in other countries in the same condition, it was necessary that all which was to be known should be treasured up in the memory; just as a man, travelling in a desert country, where there are no shops, must carry with him all the articles he may want. To enable the memory to retain it, it was necessary to throw it into metre; and to fix the attention, it was natural to embellish dry facts and principles with the ornaments peculiarly called poetry. Hence the literature of every people, however barbarous, is originally poetry; and the composition of prose is one of the first symptoms of the art of writing, as the art of writing is the first indication of the rise of a popular influence. The student must bear this in mind, when he meets with those numerous passages in Plato, which denounce the mischiefs of Homer, and of the lyric poets of Greece [1].

[1] Leg. lib. ii. p. 65; Repub. lib. x. p. 351; Ion. p. 124. vol. iii.

To us Homer is little more than a work of art. We read it without any danger of being infected with polytheism ; still less with any expectation of finding in it that treasure-house of all art and science, which it was declared to be by admirers, not less enthusiastic or erroneous, than the Christians who would trace out in the Bible whole systems of physical philosophy. We admire it, as we admire the statue of a heathen god, or the saints of Raphael and Correggio. But Homer to a Greek was, as the same statue to a heathen idolater, or Raphael's picture in a Romish chapel. His poems, in fact, joined with the other early poetry of Greece, stood to the popular religion, not as the Bible, but as the Acta Sanctorum, the Lives of the Saints, to the religion of the middle ages. They were the traditionary legends dressed up by the popery of the heathen world, for the purpose of conveying in a palatable, striking, and intelligible form to the vulgar mind, so much of religious knowledge as it was thought could be divulged or received with safety ; while the mysteries still preserved and transmitted the purer Deism, and something more than Deism, which had come into the world not through the reasonings of philosophy, but through an early revelation from heaven. And Plato, the Luther, or rather perhaps the Cranmer of his age, was compelled to aim one of the first blows of his Reformation at these idle and corrupting fictions.

The mode by which this popular poetry was conveyed to the mind was through the memory. It was taught to boys at school [1]. And one of the ordinary amusements at entertainments was to recite or sing it, or interweave song with song, so as to try the memory, like the school-boy's practice of capping verses, or to produce ludicrous juxtapositions in

[1] Protagoras.

something the same way as the cross-readings of a newspaper. The practice still continues in Persia at the present day.

"There were seated," says a distinguished modern author, giving an account of entertainments in Persia, "at the lower end of the room three or four persons possessed of the best voices in Shiraz, and of the most celebrated performers on the kemooncheh, or Persian lyre, who were to be procured. Before the supper was brought in, these persons at intervals were called on to sing and play some of the odes of Hafiz, or some of the Mirza's own lyric compositions. After supper the Mirza's reader, who had an excellent voice, came forward and read portions either from the Shah Nameh, or from prose histories of Persia and Arabia, until the Mirza called out 'Bareek—ulla. Well done.' Twice, I think, I saw Mirza Bazurg's children brought in after supper to entertain the company with what is called capping verse; and the quantity of Persian poetry these children could repeat appeared to me quite astonishing."—*Sir H. J. Brydges' Dynasty of the Kejars*, p. 150, *Prelimi. M.*

But in addition to this there were a class of men, resembling the Mirza's reader, whose business it was to recite poetry in public, and they form an important link in the history of the rise of the rhetoricians. These were the rhapsodists. And Plato, who omitted in his reformation no one of the popular follies, has devoted to them one whole Dialogue, the Ion. They appeared at the public games and assemblies in brilliant dresses, with crowns of gold, and elevated on a rostrum, from which they could command the whole body of the audience, and watch every movement of their countenance[1]. They threw themselves with enthusiasm into the poetry, which they recited, till "in the pathetic part," says Ion, "tears burst from my eyes; and my hair stands on end, when I come

[1] As the Dialogue is short, it is only necessary to refer to it generally.

to the horrible and sublime." And the audience was not slow in catching the contagion. They wept, they applauded, they stamped with all the violence of Eastern fervour; and followed the successful reader from the pulpit with substantial marks of their satisfaction in the shape of bags of money and crowns of gold. "I look down upon them," says Ion—κλαίοντάς τε καὶ δεινὸν ἐμβλέποντας καὶ ξυνθαμβοῦντας τοῖς λεγομένοις. "And I must keep an eye upon them sharply, for if they weep I shall laugh, when I get the money; and if they laugh, I shall have to cry[1]."

The rhapsody was a monologue of the drama, and the drama was only an expansion of the two great principles of Athenian taste—harmony and action. Music in all its forms of measured rhythm, of concordant sounds, of graceful outlines, of elegance in gesture, symmetry in proportions, unity and variety of figure, and richness of colouring (for there is a music to the eye as well as to the ear, and the principles of beauty in each are the same), was the soul of the Athenian drama. And to place it bodily before the senses, the theatre, with its living dialogue, and vivid appeals to the eye, brought out the whole series of movement, of which human nature is capable, to animate the scene. All the stage decorations were formed to give stir and reality to the tale. As Aristotle observes, the very word drama[2] implies energy and activity. Not only were men, talking, and moving, and acting, placed before the spectator instead of dead letters, or motionless pictures, but the same minds were thrown into the highest degree of exertion; and brought forward like some ancient torsos, with every muscle thrown out into relief, and power either of action or of endurance stamped upon every lineament.

[1] Ion, p. 133. vol. iii. [2] De Poetic. ii.

The definition of goodness, given by Plato in the Philebus, comprising the three elements of *κάλλος*, *συμμετρία*, and *ἀλήθεια* is an abstract statement of this theory [1]. A more practical observation occurs in Isocrates [2]. "It is manifest," he says, "that those who wish to write any thing which will please the people, either in prose or verse, must seek, not for such compositions as are most useful, but for those which have most story in them—*τοὺς μυθωδεστάτους*. For the common people delight in hearing such stories, and in witnessing rivalship and contests, *θεωροῦντες τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὰς ἀμίλλας*." "For this reason," he proceeds, "we must admire both Homer and the first inventors of tragedy." The subjects of the former are the battles of demigods; the others reduced tales into dramas, that they might not only be heard, but realized to the eye.

It is the union in fact of these two principles, which gives to Athenian art its undoubted pre-eminence. And whether the theory was reached by a philosophical analysis, or was, which is far nearer the truth, the instinctive perception of natural taste, it pervaded all the creations of their genius. If their ethical system defined right and wrong by the preservation of a mean [3], it also made the first excellence of mind to consist in energy or action. If truth, or the harmony of facts and principles, was pursued by their intellect, the pursuit took the form of Eristicism, or a battle of doubt and disputation. Even their relaxations were energies. The very word *σχολή*, which we have borrowed from them to describe restraint and discipline, and therefore labour and exertion, with them signified rest and ease. Their architecture partook of the same character. The frieze of the Parthenon, with its long moving line of pro-

[1] Phileb. iii. p. 224. [2] 24, b c. [3] Arist. Ethics.

cession, was necessary to balance the repose and stillness of its unbroken colonnades. And if they preserved in their sculpture the severest quietness and simplicity, they relieved it, though in a mode not quite reconcileable with modern taste, by filling the lifeless eyes, ὀμμάτων ἀχηνίας [1], with precious stones. Thus it is that when Aristotle sits down to write a treatise on the whole art of poetry or imitation, he confines himself to that branch, which unites in the most perfect manner music of thought, sound, and figure, with energy or action. He scarcely speaks of any thing but the drama, and in that of tragedy; because comedy, however full of amusement, is a discord rather than a concord, a combination, as he himself says, of inconsistencies, startling [2] and surprising the hearer, not harmonizing his affections and sentiments. And if comedy nevertheless did possess charms for a Greek mind, we must remember that the audience were themselves, during the festival of Bacchus, in a state of mental disorder, let loose from all restraint, and not far from intoxication, so that the very incongruities which they witnessed on the stage formed a concord and harmony with their own extravagances.

It is necessary for the student to bear these principles in mind, that he may understand not only what we are now sketching out, the progress of Greek education, as Plato watched and endeavoured to reform it, but the peculiar character which Greek literature assumed in the hands both of the sophists and of Plato himself. And not to lose sight of the bearing of these remarks, he must keep before him in the use of the word sophist its real meaning of a professor of education.

He will then be able to explain the extraordinary

[1] Æschyl. Agamem. 408.

[2] De Poet.

passion of the Greeks for dramatic exhibitions, and the determination into that channel of so large a proportion of its literature. Two hundred comic writers, and upwards of one hundred and eighty tragedians are enumerated by Fabricius [1], whose works have been wholly lost; and among these occur several of the profoundest philosophers of antiquity. The few plays which have been preserved to us from Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, are but as planks from the wreck; in the case of Æschylus, 7 out of 96; of Sophocles, 7 from 168; of Euripides, 19 from 103; of Aristophanes, 11 out of 72; and other authors were equally prolific. Alexis is known to have written upwards of 240 comedies; Anaxandrides, 65; Hermippus, 40; Menander, 109; Philemon, 97; Antiphanes, 260. Of tragedians, again, Anaxandrides exhibited no less than 65 plays; Ion, about 40; Isocrates, 37; Rhinthon, 38.

And the moment a written literature crept in, it assumed the same dramatic character. Herodotus wrote, as is well known, for recitation; and the best key to the peculiarities of his history is to regard it as a prose Homer—combining in real facts the sublime features of the Iliad, and the amusing tales, the "speciosa miracula [2]," of the Odyssey. Now Homer was the most dramatic of all epic poets [3]; and the recitation of the work by Herodotus himself at the Olympic Games, "chanting his stories and lulling the hearers with his music"—"ᾄδων τὰς ἱστορίας, καὶ κηλῶν τοὺς παρόντας [4]"—added to its dramatic effect: Athenæus even asserts [5] still further, that detached passages were recited in the theatre by Hegesias as part of a dramatic entertainment. The same practice

[1] Biblioth. Græc. lib. ii. c. 19 and 22.
[2] Horat. Ars Poet.
[3] Aristot. de Art. Poet.
[4] Lucian, t. i. p. 572.
[5] Lib. xiv. p. 620.

was observed by Prodicus, who used to travel about reciting in every city his Choice of Hercules, and taking money at the door[1]. In the same manner we are to account for the dramatic character given even to the grave philosophical history of Thucydides, by the insertion of its speeches. But the tendency is seen still more in the early prevalence of the form of dialogues for the written literature, more directly addressed to the popular taste. There existed, indeed, a fair library, not of useful, but of recondite knowledge, in the didactic works, chiefly physical, of Heraclitus, Democritus[2], Anaxagoras, Pherecydes, Zeno, Melissus, Antisthenes, and others[3], which, as hearing was gradually supplanted by reading, and oral instructions by writing, crept in under the form of prose, and superseded the rather heavy heroics and elegiacs, to which Pittacus, Periander, Bias, Empedocles, and others, had consigned their moral and physical science. But when a popular literature was wanted to be read, as well as one to be seen on the stage, it still retained as much as possible of the dramatic character both in the form and eristic nature of the subject. According to Laertius, dialogues were composed, among others, by Stilpo, Simias, Simon, surnamed Coriarius, who was the first to publish them, Phædo of Elis, Glauco, Plato's brother, Euclid, Æschines, and Zeno the Eleatic, whose dialogues bore the name of ἔριδας. And it is important to bear this in mind as showing the skill, with which Plato adapted the form of his writing to the popular taste,

[1] Philost. Vit. Sopho. p. 482.

[2] Democritus was a very voluminous writer.—Laert. ix. 45. He wrote five works on ethical subjects, twenty-four on physics, eleven on mathematics, seven on music, seven on arts and sciences, as agriculture, painting, &c. and nine miscellaneous.

[3] Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. c. 23.

though not without perfect conformity to his own interior principles of education.

But there was still a lower kind of composition, dramatic, indeed, but falling short of the dialogue in this point, as the dialogue fell short of the tragedy or comedy. And this brings us to Lysias and the later rhetoricians. It was an easy transition from writing practical speeches for the unhappy victims, who were compelled to plead their own cause in an Athenian court of law, to writing speeches for imaginary characters under imaginary circumstances, and to pour out upon them all those treasures of rhetorical ornament, which the correct taste of an Athenian audience (for correct, with all its faults, it was comparatively with most such bodies) would not tolerate in the common business of life. We may even trace the link, which connected the two practices together, in the common-place book, "infinitas quæstiones," which Antiphon, the first, as it is said, who wrote speeches for the courts, and sold them, kept by him, according to Cicero [1], and of which it appears that we possess large extracts, especially in the speeches in cases of murder, which pass under his name [2]. Antiphon was followed by Lysias; and in him we first meet with those imaginary orations set forth as a part of the popular literature [3]. Why he was selected by Plato as the leader of this new school of rhetoric, and a speech put into his mouth, or borrowed from himself, so full of atrocity and corruption, may be seen from the catalogue of his works. According to Plutarch, the number of speeches which passed under his name amounted to no less than 425, and of these

[1] Clem. Alex. Strom. p. 308.

[2] Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. lib. ii. cap. 26.

[3] Philostratus (Vit. Antiph. p. 500) however mentions some sophistical as well as judicial speeches by Antiphon, especially one on Concord.

upwards of 230 might fairly be considered genuine. But besides these, Suidas mentions six Epistles, five of them of precisely the same pernicious character with the speech, or, as some have understood it, the *epistle*, assigned to him in Plato's Dialogue, and the sixth on a similar subject. We are therefore to regard Lysias as the first author who endeavoured to do for the popular literature of Athens, what has been done for the literature of this country by Moore, Byron, and other panderers to the worst passions of the young, under the garb of poetry; or, if we look to the unblushing profligacy of his publications, he may be compared more justly to the wretches employed in the same way, though in a lower grade of life, who are occasionally dragged out and punished by the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Upwards of sixty writers are enumerated by Fabricius[1], as having followed in the same train, with more or less grossness. Two of them, and one especially, the worst of all, Polycrates, are expressly called sophists, and Gorgias, with several other names still higher, and connected with Greek philosophy, occur in the list. Cresollius[2] has collected sufficient evidence to prove the connection between the profession of eloquence and the practice of vice, in the persons of the Greek sophists; and we need not dwell upon it further than to take it as a clue to the most perplexing problem in the Phædrus, and the one which must naturally startle a young and pure mind.

One point may be remarked before we proceed, which may give interest even to these fictitious declamations. They were the germs of our modern novels; and the genealogy may be clearly traced. The rhetorical sophists of the age of Lysias rose up

[1] Biblioth. Græc. lib. v. c. 6.
[2] Theatr. Rhetor. lib. v. c. 8.

again to eminence under the early Roman emperors, in the persons of Polemo, Herodes Atticus, Aristides, Himerius, and others [1]. The declamations of these rhetoricians were for the most part on fictitious subjects, or on passages in history, which gave the same scope for the mixture of truth and falsehood as an historical novel. As it was easy to pass from the dramatic epic of Homer to the pure drama of Æschylus, so by a retrograde movement it was equally easy to transfer powers of picturesque description, pathetic excitement, and rhetorical ornament, from a speech to a story. Fiction was the basis, and mere amusement or pleasure the end of each. It is singular that Heliodorus, a Christian bishop, about the time of Arcadius and Honorius, was the first author who made the digression. His Æthiopica, which is a perfect love story, containing the history of Theagenes and Chariclea, but without any thing unworthy of a Christian bishop, is supposed to have been founded on facts, though mixed with extraordinary adventures. It was the Herodotus of novel writing, and it seems it was taken as a model by Achilles Tatius, Longus, Eumathius, Chariton, and other erotic writers. From this source [2] we may trace the romance of the middle ages ; and from this the genealogy is clear to the modern fashionable novel—not, indeed, openly profligate like its germ in the speech of Lysias, but perhaps scarcely less mischievous in its ultimate effect, or less indicative of a vitiated taste in the public mind.

[1] Fabric. Biblioth. Græc. lib. iv. c. 31.
[2] Ibid. lib. v. c. 6. p. 789.

CHAPTER XIX.

Our present business, however, is with the character of the Greek rhetorician. It was, indeed, in an imperfect, unfledged state when Plato attacked it in the Phædrus and the Gorgias. It was then only one among the many offensive features of the new school; but it developed itself very rapidly; absorbed in itself the duties of education, and became almost exclusively designated by the title of Sophist. It will not be out of place to give a brief sketch of it, as exhibited in an age much later than that of Plato. We shall be able to appreciate more fairly the efforts made by Plato to crush it in its birth, when we see it in its full form; and we shall scarcely be guilty of an anachronism, since all the features may be traced distinctly even in the time of Plato[1].

Some little interest also is attached to the subject, from two facts: first, that the rhetoricians at Athens were the originals of the professors in our modern universities, and that many of the forms now in use in Oxford and Cambridge are distinctly derived from similar usages in the Greek and Asiatic schools: and secondly, that the sermons of the Christian Church, if not directly imitated from the practice of the schools, partook, at least in early ages, of their character.

Bingham seems to connect them rather with the practice of the Jewish synagogue[2]; but even the

[1] For a brief but amusing outline of the same character see Lucian's Rhetorum Præceptor, vol. iii. p. 1.

[2] Book xiv. c. 4. s. 24.

Jewish custom may probably be traced to the influence of Greek philosophy. And considering that the great antagonists of Christianity, in its early ages, were the schools of philosophy, it was natural that beneficial usages should be reciprocally adopted from each other by them both. The bishop's chair, the posture of sitting while he preached, the style of many of the homilies, and particularly the practice of applauding, all seem to indicate at least a comparison in the minds of the congregation between the sermon and the oration of the rhetorician[1]. Laymen also were on special occasions permitted to preach[2], seemingly on the same principle. Augustine and Jerome often speak of sermons under the name of disputations. To this we may add two facts: first, that the Church of Rome, whatever appears to have been the practice in the time of Justin Martyr, certainly had dropped the use of sermons in the time of Sozomen, and until Leo revived it; and after him it was discontinued again for five hundred years, till restored by Pope Pius V.[3] And this fact is in accordance with the different feelings entertained by the Greeks and Latins respectively on the subject of oratory. The other fact is, that even in the time of Chrysostom, preaching was chiefly confined to the cities[4]; and that it was not till the beginning of the sixth century that it was established generally in country parishes in the Gallican Church[5]. These peculiarities seem to point to the rhetorical schools of antiquity, as having been under the eyes of the Church, when the system of preaching was established: and the constant warning which occurs in the homilies against regarding them, as they were

[1] Bing. Christ. Ant. book xiv. c. 4. s. 27.
[2] Ibid. b. xiv. c. 4. s. 4.
[3] Ibid. b. xiv. c. 4.
[4] Chrysost. Hom. lxv. de Martyr.
[5] Eccles. Antiq. book xiv. c. 4. s. 9.

too often regarded, as rhetorical exhibitions, shows the reality of the comparison, though it marks at the same time the sound sense and piety, with which their institution was set on foot by the Church. The same fact should also be remembered, when we are apt to accuse a homily, especially in the Greek Fathers, of too much rhetorical artifice. They were writing for a people of rhetoricians.

To return, however, to the University of Athens, in the most flourishing period of its formal establishment under the Roman emperors.

The first thing required by a Greek rhetorician, or, to give him a more intelligible name, by a Greek Professor of rhetoric, was an audience. And it is well known by modern professors that this condition is not easily provided. Athens, however, contained a very different population from Oxford or Cambridge. And though the pecuniary demands of her lecturers were far more exorbitant, and the attendance for the most part was carried on upon the voluntary principle, there was little difficulty in filling the school.

We must imagine a race of men, quick and acute in intellect, restless in temperament both of mind and body, eager for any novelty, prompt in admiration, delighting in excitement, and passing rapidly into any feeling suggested at the moment. We must give them nothing to do, no public or private business of any importance, no active employment, either of laborious study, or commerce, or domestic duties, to occupy their time. They must be turned out from day-break into the market, the baths, and the exercising grounds, to spend their morning as well as they can, in hearing and talking. They must be provided with an exquisite sensibility to musical sounds, a passion for splendour and brilliancy, and a habit of yielding themselves up to every voluptuous indul-

gence. Two other features in their character must be strongly marked. The first an extraordinary readiness to surrender themselves to the influence of any individual, who assumed the command over them. In the brain of the Athenian, to speak phrenologically, there was a full development of the organ of veneration. He had shaken off his allegiance to laws, to governors, to stern moral principles of duty, to the gods of his fathers; but he could not shake off the subjection which nature has laid upon us all in the presence of a superior nature. He worshipped a wrong object, a mere idol, but he could not live without some worship or another. Trace this in the extraordinary fascination exercised over the Athenian people by a Pericles or a Cleon, in the very jealousy and suspicion, with which they ostracised superior goodness as if afraid of its ascendancy, and endeavoured to steel themselves against the spells of eloquence. Compare with it the strong, and, to a northern ear, the rhapsodical description given either by Plato [1] of the effect produced by the presence of beauty, or by Sappho [2] of the symptoms of love; and add to this the extravagant honours paid by them to the object of their admiration, and we shall be prepared to see them stand in the presence of an orator as before a superior being, whom they all but adored.—"I attached myself to him," says Eunapius [3], speaking of his tutor Proæresius, as to a god—"I believed him immortal—*ἀγήρων τινὰ καὶ ἀθάνατον αὐτὸν ἐνόμιζον, καὶ προσεῖχον ὥσπερ αὐτοκλήτῳ καὶ ἄνευ τινὸς πραγματείας φανέντι Θεῷ*;" and the language is common. Then remember, what has before been mentioned, the musical ear of the Athenian. And by a musical ear, in order to comprehend the almost

[1] Phædr. p. 35. [2] Longinus.
[3] Eunap. Proæres. p. 102; Philost. passim.

fanatical enthusiasm, which at a well-turned sentence or favourite cadence spread like lightning through a whole lecture-room, we must understand a singular faculty of anticipating rhythm, of running on, as it were, before the speeches, and of then feeling exquisite pleasure in the fulfilment of the expectations indulged. It is this which enables us all to take more pleasure in a tune repeated, than when it is heard for the first time. It is the principle of beauty in dancing, rhyme, metre, and all rhythmical movements or objects. A dull person, who moves no faster than the external impressions, derives little or no pleasure from their correct adjustment; and feels no pain when they are out of order, because no expectation has been raised, and therefore none is disappointed. But it was the peculiar genius of the Athenian to anticipate [1]. Before an orator had finished the first clause of his sentence, they could tell the end. It was the same in thoughts as in words: in both a faculty of *σύνεσις*, or a ready suggestion of ideas which were coming, and an exquisite sensibility to pleasure when they fell in aptly with the expectation.

This talent, which in fact is one of the most striking characteristics of genius, must be kept in view by the student throughout the whole history of that remarkable people. It is shown in the formation of their language, as much as in their popular deliberations. Every thing had reference to a foreseen end. Their words were inflected from the end—their accents regulated by the last syllable—their metrical laws depended on the close of the metre. Their periods arranged from the termination—their rhythm and metre infinitely varied, passing in an instant from slow to rapid, from short to long, yet always finding an ear ready to slide into it at a moment's notice—their

[1] Thucyd.

music again extremely simple, made up more of melody than harmony—every thing from the words in their mouth to the thoughts in their hearts indicated the same rapidity in the formation of their ideas, which their great historian thought it necessary to point out at the very beginning of his work, as a clue to all that followed in the Peloponnesian war. "They are quick," he says [1], "to devise fresh plans ὀξεῖς ἐπινοῆσαι. And when they have once imagined them, they consider the accomplishment certain,—the object already their own,—a failure in obtaining it as a sort of loss of property, and success only a step to fresh fancies, and additional acquisitions."

And the same character is given of them by Cleon [2].

"You are of all persons in the world the easiest to delude with novelties, and paradoxes of rhetoricians, and the most unwilling to abide by previous determinations. You are the slaves of every thing which is strange and extraordinary: and despisers of all that is usual. The first wish of each of you is to be able to speak yourself; if this fail, the second is to enter the lists with those that can speak; never to seem behindhand in following the thoughts of the speaker, and when he is making a sensible remark to applaud him in an instant before he finishes his sentence. And you are quick as lightning in anticipating what men are saying; but very slow to foresee the events which will follow: curiously inquiring for any thing but the circumstances of every-day life, and not even attending as you ought to the present moment. In a word, you are mastered and overpowered by the pleasures of the ear, and are more like to an audience sitting in the lecture-room of a sophist, than to an assembly deliberating on the safety of a state."

And with a people differently constituted it would have been wholly impossible for such a being as the Greek rhetorician, a dealer in mere sounds and words,

[1] Thucyd. lib. i. c. 70. [2] Ibid. lib. iii. c. 38.

and rhythm, to have been called into existence, or at any rate to have flourished. We must not forget to give our Athenian audience a passion for imitation, and an ambition for obtaining over others the same power, which they delighted to feel exercised over themselves. Plato has very forcibly marked this feature of their character in the beginning of the first Alcibiades, under his usual type of Alcibiades himself; but we must pass on and merely refer to it.

CHAPTER XX.

To collect such a people as this in the theatre or lecture-room of the rhetorician was no difficult matter; but the professor himself neglected no means of attraction. He published a programme, dispersed placards, called himself on the principal inhabitants, issued notes in no very delicate form, if we may trust Arrian: "Come and hear me, Δεῦτε καὶ ἀκούσατέ μου [1]," and sent round a beadle to the places of resort to announce that he was ready; "at which intelligence," says Philostratus of the sophist Adrian [2], "in a moment senators and knights, and all, sprung from their seats and flew to the Athenæum." If any reluctance was shown, he did not hesitate to press the matter and entreat the favour of an attendance, or even took care [3] to secure the applauses which were necessary to maintain his expectation, by hiring and packing an audience, if we may judge from the practice at Rome, at the rate of about two shillings a-head.

Varo, a rich young sophist of Smyrna, exacted attendance on his lectures as part of the interest on his loans [4]; and what a heavy tax this was, may be inferred from the conduct of Polemon, who had borrowed money from him, and when threatened by him with a writ, in consequence of his non-attendance, was at last induced to sit out a declamation, of a whole day's length, full of barbarism and absurdities, till the patience of the older sophist was exhausted, and he was obliged to cry out, Bring the writ.

[1] Arrian.—Epict. lib. iii.
[2] Lib. ii. De Vit. Soph.
[3] Plin. lib. ii. Ep. 30.
[4] Philostr. Vit. Polem. p. 540.

These efforts indicated no little anxiety for the success of the exhibition. And it is fortunate for modern professors that they can look on empty benches and unapplauding hearers with far more equanimity than their more ardent predecessors. "Sleepless nights[1]," "pale cheeks," "agony like that of a gladiator perspiring at the prospect of a death-blow[2]," "the melting away of the very heart from anxiety," corrections, and countercorrections, and revisings, and practisings, and, if others felt like Julian for Libanius, a broken rest even among the friends of the professor, were the natural preliminaries to an Athenian lecture.

When the morning of the great day arrived, the professor took a bath, robed himself in his most splendid dress, or in his scarlet gown of office[3], put on his most brilliant rings, (even Aristotle, we know from Ælian, was not proof against this piece of vanity,) and, attended by a numerous body of pupils and followers, proceeded to the place of action. This was, according to circumstances, the public theatre, or perhaps a temple, or a private lecture-room attached to the professor's house. In some instances a basilica was used, in others the great council chamber; or a private gentleman lent his house, as is still the practice in London for benefit concerts. It contained rows of seats rising against the wall, benches in the centre, and a raised platform with accommodation for the more illustrious personages present; in the centre of which, and above them all, rose the professor's throne or chair, covered with a canopy, and provided, I may add, with a soft, copious, embroidered cushion.

[1] Synesius in Dion. [2] Philost. in Vit. Polem.

[3] There is a little question about the colours of the different faculties at Athens, but the authorities incline to scarlet for the rhetorician, and grey for the philosophers.

It may be interesting to the curious in such subjects, that the cushion used by Isocrates was of a bright saffron colour, and excited no little jealousy and sarcasm. And those who are attentive to minute touches will recognize the envied easy chair, μαλθακὴν κατάκλισιν [1], in the soft reclining bank on which Socrates stretches himself in the Phædrus, and in the ample blankets heaped upon Prodicus' bed in the Protagoras [2]. On coming forward to take possession of the throne, says Themistius [3], the professor gazed round upon his audience, greeting them with smiles and bows, and his salutations were particularly directed to the principal person present. His own countenance, according to his character, was either grave and thoughtful, or wore a cheerful, and animated, or even triumphant appearance. Scopelian was remarkable for the delicacy and gentleness, ἁβρότητα, of his demeanour. "His brow was smoothed," says his biographer, "his eyes bright and sparkling, with an agreeable volubility; and a sweet smile played on his lips, to the enchantment of his hearers." And all this was not lost upon the Athenians. The very appearance of the sophist Alexander, if we may trust Philostratus, caused a murmur of applause, βόμβον, to run through the theatre, before he uttered a word. Proæresius, on the other hand, the tutor of Gregory Nazianzen, came forward to the theatre "like a courser summoned to the plain, ὥσπερ ἵππος εἰς πεδίον κληθείς." Others, with less taste and self-possession, indulged in a variety of affectations; twisting their limbs, winking with their eyes, and fidgetting with their fingers. But Tatian attributes this to a sophist of

[1] Heliod. in Æthiop. lib. ii.

[2] Protag. p. 146. So the five blankets in which Pheidippides is wrapped up in the Nubes, v. 10.

[3] Orat. vi.

the Cynical school, Crescens, and perhaps it is not fair to impute such indecorums to the profession in general.

It is unnecessary to give specimens of the declamations themselves, inasmuch as the Phædrus contains three, and among them one of each style of rhetoric, prevalent in the Athenian schools. The first, which is put into the mouth of Lysias, so far from being, as Taylor supposes[1], wholly unlike the genuine works of that orator, resembles so closely the peculiarities of his style, particularly as exhibited in his Funeral Oration, that it is scarcely possible to believe that it is an imitation. And yet one of the most striking features in the humour of Plato is his power of parodying. And he scarcely ever introduces a sophist without an attentive reader perceiving that his own full, natural, easy style, passes into something forced and elaborate, which indicates that a caricature is intended. It is so, evidently, with the conversation of Polus, Prodicus, and Protagoras, with the speech of Antiphon in the Convivium, and with the two last speeches in the first part of the Phædrus. Happily in this country we are so unaccustomed to mere rhetorical displays, that we have few terms to express the nice distinctions of style; and it requires a very delicate ear, and considerable familiarity with the language, even to feel the difference. Lysias, however, was at the head of the writers who covered their thoughts, to use the ordinary metaphor, with words as with a sheet, clear, fine, smooth, and arranged in elaborate folds, with nothing figured or passionate, and little ornament except a frequent antithesis of sound rather than of ideas. The image evidently before the eye of Diony-

[1] Taylor, Vit. Lys. Dionysius of Halicarnassus makes it a parody. Eliad. Pomp. p. 126. So Ast in loco.

sius, when he describes this style, is that of an ancient statue, thinly but artificially draped. Gorgias, on the other hand, whose tone is evidently imitated in the second speech in the Phædrus, which Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates, was the founder of the Asiatic schools; ἐν πολλοῖς, says Dionysius[1], πάνυ φορτικήντε καὶ ὑπέρογκον ποιῶν τὴν κατασκευὴν, καὶ οὐ πόῤῥω διθυράμβων ἔνια φεγγόμενος. It resembled an extravagant caricature of a modern Irish style. If Lysias drest himself in a sheet, Gorgias wrapt himself in a heavy cumbrous piece of tapestry, embroidered with figures, and stiff with tinsel. And as his gait partook of the same ostentatious pretensions, his appearance was not unlike that of the old Dicast in the Wasps of Aristophanes, pompously strutting about in his new Persian fur cloak, thrown over his old thread-bare attire[2].

The style of Protagoras, as of a man uniting the philosopher and the orator, partook of both characters. It employed illustrations and figures, myths and metaphors, but for the purpose of conveying ideas, more than of indulging in mere sound. And when a philosophical subject was to be stated, he used a dry, cold, logical, and elaborately plain form of argument, which contrasted strongly, and not agreeably, with the "purple patches" which were stitched upon it. Whoever reads the Protagoras carefully, with a view to observe the style, and then passes at once to the third speech in the Phædrus, or the panegyric on Heavenly Love, will at once recognize these features in both. And whoever renders his ear and his mind thoroughly familiar with the natural style of Plato, when speaking in his own person, and even on the most elevating subject, will protest against imputing to his own bad taste and

[1] De Lys. Judic. vol. ii. p. 131. Hud.
[2] Aristoph. Vespæ, p. 251, Mitchell's edit.

ambitious love of ornament the affected cadences, dithyrambs, bombast, stiff periods, frigid metaphors, and harsh compounds, which he himself carefully fixes on the sophist, whom he is holding up to ridicule.

The subject of these declamations, as Plato himself hints [1], was of very little consequence. An address to Bacchus, or an eulogium on the city of Rome, or on "a well in the temple of Æsculapius," or on "the Ægean sea after a voyage across it," or a panegyric on the Emperor, or "a lamentation on the burning of the temple of Ceres," were the subjects of Aristides and Adrian in later periods. Sometimes it was a feigned judicial case; a master accuses his slave of adultery; a woman is charged with poisoning [2]. At other times it was historical: "Demosthenes advising war with Alexander," or "Pericles consoling the Athenians;" and it is needless to add that Marathon, Platæa, and Salamis, were a never-failing subject. "Take care," says Lucian, "to bring in Marathon and Cynegirus, without which nothing can be done; in every thing you say make Athos navigable, and bridge over the Hellespont, and cloud the sun with the arrows of the Persians; let Xerxes fly, and Leonidas be wondered at." Even in a law-suit for the recovery of a sucking pig, the sophist found it impossible to abstain from Marathon and Salamis [3]. And that in the days of Plato it was the same, may be seen from his own speech, the Menexenus, and from many passages, familiar to scholars, in the Comedies of Aristophanes. Sometimes, instead of speeches there was a florid description of the march of Xerxes, or of some picturesque scenery; and this must be remembered when the

[1] Phædr. [2] Fabric. Bibl. Græc. lib. iii. c. 30.
[3] Epig. in Anthol. lib. xi. Lucian's Rhetor. Præcept.

reader of the Phædrus comes to Plato's picture of the scene on the banks of the Illyssus, which Plutarch, not seeing its meaning, as a satirical imitation of the rhetoricians, has censured as puerile; although Plato has sufficiently guarded against the suspicion of his indulging in such a toy as landscape painting, not only by the evident extravagance of the language, but by the expression of Phædrus's surprise, and by pleading guilty himself, in the person of Socrates, to a fondness for the haunts of men rather than for inanimate nature. It has been often remarked, that there is comparatively little picturesque description in the classical poetry. Perhaps the abundance of it in modern art, whether in poetry or painting, is no very satisfactory feature in our taste, and may indicate, in our minds, rather a defect of masculine vigour and moral perceptions, than a genuine taste for the beauties of nature. At any rate we may trace this feature in modern literature, as well as our novel writing, to the schools of the sophists [1].

There was a far worse feature in the subject of these declamations, which is intentionally brought forward by Plato, in his selection of Lysias' speech. The rhetoricians not only pandered to the vices of the day [2], but to display their powers they especially selected subjects, frequently revolting, generally frivolous, or paradoxical. And the practice was so common, that we find a regular classification of them [3], under the head of ἄδοξοι and παράδοξοι; the latter merely strange, the former such as recommended

[1] For one of the most beautiful specimens of ancient landscape writing, evidently formed upon the rhetorical models of the day, see a letter of St. Bazil to Gregory, describing the scenery of his hermitage in Pontus, Epist. xix.

[2] See, especially, Athenæus, lib. iv. c. 13, where he speaks of the dialogues composed by Persæus of Cittium, out of the Commentaries of Stilpo and Zeno.

[3] Tzetzes, Chil. xi.

some flagitious form of vice. Compared with this, we may well excuse the panegyrics on mice, flies, salt, fevers, earthen pots, gnats, fleas, beetles, quartan fevers, bumble bees, eggs, donkeys, vomitings, and gout, which occupied no little portion of the works of the most admired rhetoricians[1].

[1] Cresol. Theatr. Rhet. lib. iii. c. 9.
A favourite subject was the λόγος ἐσχηματισμένος, or double entendre; where one thing was said, and another meant.—See Cresol. Theatr. Rhetor. Proclus in Alcib., vol. ii. p. 243.

CHAPTER XXI.

It is evident that the attraction of such compositions must have been found in the style; and the beauty of the style must have consisted in its musical combination of words. Euripides, the sophist of tragedians, commenced this art in poetry. And when we find him attacked for this, as well as for the falsity of his sentiments, by Aristophanes, the best of critics, we may be sure there was no slight connection between such a depravation of taste, and a still worse depravation of morals [1].

We have no words in English to describe the many artifices of style, which charmed the Athenian ear, and most of which Diodorus Siculus [2] and Cicero assign to the invention of Gorgias. There were the antithesis, the balanced clauses, the rhyming terminations, the "turned and rounded" sentence, the flow of easy sound, from which even the slightest roughness was carefully "pared and scraped" off, the metrical and almost versicular arrangement of short periods, which a careful reader will observe in the imitations of Plato; so that the beauties of sound which had been so studiously cultivated on the stage, were now to proceed forth from the professor's chair, and wanted nothing but the chorus, and the flute, and a greater monotony of rhythm, to become poetry. And a reader must be very insensible to music who does not in some degree understand and make allowances for such a taste as this in a voluptuous age

[1] Aristoph. Ranæ. [2] Lib. xii.

of a Greek people, in the possession of the Greek language.

The want of instrumental accompaniment was supplied as far as it could be by a most elaborate modulation of voice. The recitation was carried on in a sort of varied chaunt, passing, according to the subject, from the most "silvery and honied" tones to the full bursts of the "Tyrrhenian or Olympic trumpet," which it imitated by a peculiar metallic sound; for such appears to have been the rhetorical κρότος or ἠχώ, or deep sonorous roll of the voice, reserved for sublimer occasions [1].

It seems singular to the common-place taste of modern days, that the Greeks could have found such pleasure in such a frivolous amusement. But there is a large and splendid building in one of the principal streets of the English metropolis, appropriated, at an enormous expense, to foreign professors, who there deliver, every Tuesday and Saturday evening during the season, lectures of a somewhat similar kind with the ancient sophists; lectures, indeed, relieved by large instrumental accompaniments; but of which the great and striking charm consists in certain elaborate modulations of voice, either "silvery and honied," or "sonorous and trumpet-like." And the charms of these tones are so great, that they require no assistance from any words—at any rate, from words with any meaning or sentiments attached to them. And in this the Greek had the advantage, as he had the advantage also in that part of his exhibition which corresponded with the dance of the ancient chorus. Whatever vice

[1] Critics have been much perplexed with these words. Philostratus in more than one passage distinguishes between them. But they evidently both referred to modulations of the voice.

was contained in the declamation of the sophist, perhaps we should not accuse their graceful, decorous, composed action of any thing resembling the modern ballet.

In fact, the sophistical declamations were the Greek Opera, economically curtailed of its scenic decorations. And Signor Gorgias and Signor Polemo are the genuine originals of the tribe of foreign singers, with high pay and higher pretensions, who collect crowds to hang, with rapture, on a few unintelligible sounds; and whose character and profession is held in pretty much the same estimation by sensible Englishmen, as it was by sensible Athenians[1]. We have only to give the corps of her Majesty's Theatre a charter for conferring degrees to make the parallel complete.

The analogy will enable us to form a juster conception of the intense delight, with which an Athenian audience listened to the strains of their rhetoricians. Their eloquence, according to Philostratus and others, was as "the heavens studded with stars;" or "meads covered with blossoms;" or "the purple robe and girdle, with which Juno adorned herself to meet Jupiter[2];" or "a mosaic of gems;" or "a stream of gold;" or "an embroidery of pearls and diamonds;" or, as Philostratus describes the style of the sophist Herod, "a golden sand gleaming beneath the eddies of a river of silver,"—*χρυσοῦ ψῆγμα ποταμῷ ἀργυροδίνῃ ὑπανγάζον.* Sometimes it took a loftier tone, and became the very voice of inspiration. The professor was seized with the god: *φοιβάζειν — ἐνθουσιασμὸς — θεοφόρητος ὁρμὴ —ὑποβακχεύειν—κορυβαντιᾶν*—are the terms used to de-

[1] There is an oration of Themistius, Orat. xxiii. clearing himself from the charge of sophistry, which strikingly illustrates the resemblance.

[2] Themist. Orat. v.

scribe his appearance, when the torrent of supernatural eloquence burst from his mouth. And the reader of the Phædrus must remember this when he comes to similar expressions, with which Socrates accounts for the dithyrambic character of his language on the banks of the Ilyssus.

And scarcely less excitement pervaded the audience. At the close of a well-turned sentence, or some brilliant metaphor, they clapped their hands, stamped with their feet, jumped up and danced with delight, —ἐξάλλεσθαι, says Plutarch, καὶ προσορχεῖσθαι[1] τοῖς λόγοις;—or in the still stronger language of Chrysostom[2], "they uttered all kinds of disorderly voices, and behaved like madmen, throwing their bodies into convulsions, and rolling about." And this was the case even in the churches, where the practice of applauding the preacher had been brought from the rhetorical schools. They "shook their robes," "threw up their hands and their handkerchiefs," shouted out "well done," "admirable," "divine," "wonderful," "brilliant"—"called out the professor's name, and cried for crowns upon his head[3]"—βοὰ, βόμβος, μυκηθμὸς, θόρυβος, are the words used to express their clamours. And in the mean time, it is said, the orator "sat on his lofty throne, gazing round with delight on the enthusiasm of his admirers beneath."

Silence, on the contrary, unless it were the silence of deep and hushed admiration, θάμβος καὶ ἔκπληξις, not only sunk the spirits, but in some cases provoked the indignation of the mortified professor. Aristides refused to exhibit before the Emperor Marcus

[1] Libanius ad eos qui molestum eum appellabant, cap. xi. Fabric. Biblioth. Græc., vol. v. c. 6.

[2] Homil. i. Verb. Isai.

[3] Cresoll. Theatr. Rhet. lib. iii. c. 20.

Antoninus, except on the condition that he might invite a body of friends to shout and applaud him as much as they chose [1]. Proæresius "commenced his speech gently, and quietly waited at the close of each sentence for the applause of the company." And one professor mentioned by Philostratus, once in his mortification forgot himself so far as to box the ears of a gentleman who had fallen asleep during his harangue. But such failures were rare. In the generality of instances the professor sat enthroned to inhale the incense of applause. Sometimes "he rose from his seat, and stood on tip-toe," "spreading himself out like a peacock [2]," or "threw himself back in his chair," with "a grand and solemn consciousness of his own magnificence." Or if his voice was becoming hoarse, he had recourse to gum arabic, and a glass of water, which a slave always carried behind him. But even the most perfect triumph of vanity must have an end. The declamation came to its close, and the orator descended from his chair amidst a roar of applause. The audience crowded round him [3], to praise, to wonder at him; sometimes to embrace him in rapture, kissing, or rather as it is in the Greek, licking his breast and his hands, as if he were a god, while he himself paraded the lecture-room, asking each person in turn, "What think you, how have I succeeded [4]?" "Wonderfully, my lord, as I hope to be saved—*θαυμαστῶς, κύριε, τὴν ἐμὴν σωτηρίαν.*" "What thought you of my description

[1] Libanius indeed was obliged at the beginning of his speeches to caution his hearers against expressing their admiration too vehemently.—Oration cited above, cap. 11.

[2] The peacock is the favourite metaphor for describing the professor.

[3] Eunap. in Vit. Proæres. p. 215.

[4] Arrian, Epict. lib. iii. cap. 23.

of Pan? Was it not a splendid passage on the nymphs?" "Admirable! Extraordinary! ὑπερφυῶς," was the ready answer.

But we must now take the professor back to his house, accompanied, after a successful effort, by a triumphant procession of admirers and pupils.

CHAPTER XXII.

It is a tempting subject to follow him farther into his school, and point out the curious parallel between the system of instruction which prevailed in Athens, and the other universities of the Roman empire, and the state of the universities of Europe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But a few words will indicate its general character sufficiently to illustrate the Dialogues of Plato.

It was in the first place conducted on the voluntary principle. Professors delivered lectures, but attendance was not compulsory. Secondly, it was not catechetical. The only demand made on the memory and active thought of the student was to retain a few rhetorical rules, and acquire a fluency of words by habits of declamation. Thirdly, it rested on the teaching of individuals, and those individuals necessarily indulged in dogmatism, and pretensions,—*προοίμια γοῦν ποιεῖται τῶν λόγων τὸ οἶδα, καὶ τὸ γινώσκω, καὶ πάλαι διέσκεμμαι.* "They begin," says Philostratus[1], "all their harangues with 'I know,' 'I am sure,' 'I have examined the question.'" And he adds another phrase, which necessarily follows individual dogmatism,—*καὶ βέβαιον ἀνθρώπῳ οὐδὲν*, "There is no truth certain in the world." As attendance was voluntary, the main object of the professor was to flatter the popular taste; he followed instead of leading. As his dominion only reached

[1] De Vit. Sophist. Proœ. p. 480.

over the lecture-room—as there were, unhappily for Athens, no colleges or collegiate discipline — all moral training was necessarily omitted. There is a beautiful, and even affecting speech of Maximus Tyrius, the Sophist, (we scarcely like to apply the name to him [1],) on this very subject: "What benefit," he says, "can I derive from all this flow of eloquence, these frequent orations, these elaborate lectures? Applause? I have more than enough. Reputation? I am sick of the name. What can be done while there are so many to praise the professor, and none to follow his counsels? You have souls, and you have ears. You praise philosophy, but will not obey it. All applaud, not one imitates—*ἐπαινοῦσι πάντες, μιμεῖται δὲ οὐδείς.* Every place," he proceeds, "is full of teachers; the thing is cheap as dirt, and springs up in a night. I would even dare to say that of such a philosophy as this, there are more instructors than there are pupils. And yet," he concludes, "the sum of all philosophy is practice, and the road to it requires a teacher, to raise up the minds of the young, *τὰς τῶν νέων ψυχὰς συνεπαίροντος*; and to discipline their passions and affections, *διαπαιδαγωγούντος αὐτῶν τὰς φιλοτιμίας*; and to regulate their appetites by the administration of pleasure and pain, *καὶ οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ λύπαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς τὰς ὀρέξεις συμμετρουμένου.*"

A member of either of the English universities will sum up the whole complaint in one word, "They had no colleges." And if they can feel grateful for any bounty of Providence provided for them by past generations, it will be for these institutions, which are intended to save the young men of England from exposure to a system like that of Athens.

The education, moreover, such as it was, was ex-

[1] Dissert. xxxvii. p. 386.

tremely expensive. The whole expense of ordinary college tuition at Oxford is about sixteen guineas a year. Now although the fees at Athens varied, ὁ μὲν μισθὸς ἦν ἄλλος ἄλλου, καὶ ὡς ἕκαστος οἴκου εἶχεν [1], according to the wealth of the individual, they were in all cases very great, even in the time of Plato. So also Augustin, "Hæc omnia, quando a magistris docentur, pro magno habentur, magno pretio emuntur, magnâ jactatione venduntur [2]." About three hundred pounds seems to have been the usual payment to the professor in early times [3]. This was the fee of Protagoras, Gorgias, Zeno, and Isæus. In some instances a talent was given. In others this was reduced to a thousand drachmas, as in the practice of Isocrates, Lycurgus, and Aristippus; and inferior teachers went even lower. "They promise happiness to the young men," says Socrates, "at the rate of four or five minæ." But these fees seemed to have gained little more than entrance to a course of lectures; and when it pleased a distinguished rhetorician to make an exhibition, ἐπιδείξεις ἐμμίσθους ποιεῖσθαι [4], the admission ticket was sometimes even as high as fifty drachmas, as in the well-known case of Prodicus. The consequences of this system were very injurious. And it would be easy to collect the charges made against the Sophists of avarice, meanness, and cruelty in the exaction of their fees [5]. Plato never omits an opportunity of reprobating this mercenary teaching; and in the Republic he endeavours to place the system on its proper footing, and to establish those relations of duty and affection between the teacher and pupil, which would render the task of education spontaneous and gratuitous. Wholly gratuitous, indeed, it

[1] Philost. in Vit. Scopelian.
[2] De Doctr. Christ. cap. 7.
[3] Laertius, p. 663.
[4] Arist. Rhetor. lib. iii.
[5] See Cresoll. Theatr. Rhetor. lib. v. cap. 4, 5, 6.

cannot be without drawing far too largely on the contingencies of human disinterestedness. But it is well, when as in the collegiate system, permanent fixed incomes can be guaranteed, and little or no room left for the thought of money to enter into the office of instruction.

It is unnecessary to point out another vital defect in the Sophistical education. It made pleasure, the pleasure of the ear, the end of literature, and literature the end of life; and thus contrived to bring together the two fatal moral heresies, which in the Epicurean and Peripatetic schools have drawn men away from the grand Catholic truth, that duty, not pleasure, the formation of the whole man, not the pampering of his reason, is the true law of education and of action. Few things perhaps have so tended, as such a theory, to corrupt the mind of a nation. The mere voluptuousness of the senses can attract few but the worst class of men. But the voluptuousness of literature, seemingly addressing itself to the reason, captivates the best. It is free from grossness, provokes no remorse, is followed by no shame, can face the public eye with the certainty of obtaining applause instead of reprobation. It fills up the vacant hour, occupies without satiety, apparently exercises our best and purest faculties, and thus converts even self-indulgence into a subject for pride and respect. And when pleasurable emotion in any one case is made the rule of right, it will soon become a rule of universal application; and a taste for literature will pave the way for the ready gratification of all other tastes alike, the more readily in proportion to the ardour with which it is indulged. The state of literary society in France previous to the breaking out of the Revolution, and the private history of most merely literary men, will illustrate the fact, and be the best comment on the view taken

by Plato in the Phædrus of a purely voluptuous literature. But the great and crying sin of the Sophistical education system, the sin which the satirist brings forward full as prominently as the philosopher [1], was its atheistic character. It left out religion. Religion, though in the obscured and corrupt form of Homer's Mythology, and Simonides' Hymns, and Hesiod's Cosmogony, was an essential element in the old Athenian system. Children were taught to worship God, though superstitiously. And superstition with all its evils is a million times better than infidelity. But with the sophists intellect was everything, and God nothing. And thus followed the natural end : " Professing themselves wise, they became fools." And " even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to work all uncleanness with greediness[2]."

This is the last point to be mentioned, but unhappily the first to be remembered, in approaching the Phædrus. And unless we can prepare our minds to judge fairly and candidly[3] of the difficulties with which Plato was surrounded—to take, not insulated passages, but the whole tenor of his writings—to judge him by the end at which he aims, not by the means which he deemed necessary to attain them—to distinguish his serious protests and denunciations against vice, from the language which he puts into the mouth of others, or employs by a sort of moral economy, in working his way to better things—we shall only do most grievous injustice to Plato, and no little harm to ourselves by reading the Phædrus at all. We had better abstain from it, as men would

[1] Aristophanes, Nubes, passim.

[2] Romans i.

[3] For a very striking instance of unfairness, see Mosheim de Turbata Ecclesia, § 43, p. 41.

close the Bible, because to impure minds every thing is impure. Above all we must remember that he was writing for the Athenian people.

Men cannot comprehend Plato, and still less can they undertake to defend him from the gravest of the charges brought against him by partial and superficial readers, if by an unpardonable anachronism his principles and language are transferred from one age and country to another totally different. We may bless the mercy of Providence, which has preserved European society far purer in its outward form than the society of Athens, and in which therefore we cannot endure to hear language, or to speak of things, which Plato, as pure as ourselves—more pure, because pure in the midst of a general corruption—in endeavouring to reform, was compelled to speak of; and which he spoke of without reserve, because in the world around him there was neither shame nor concealment. But in estimating the character of Plato, the question to be asked is, not if such things are spoken of, but how they are spoken of, and with what object, and under what circumstances. Is it done to draw men from sin, or to encourage them in it? And when the mode of withdrawing them is considered, the question is not, if it be such as we might be bound to adopt under a different dispensation from God, but if it be the best, which could be used in the age and by the man who employed it[1].

The fear of God, his love to man, our awful position as regenerated Christians, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection, and the judgment

[1] For some sensible observations on this subject, the reader may be referred to Mr. Miller's Bampton Lectures, Lect. iv. and v., and Preface to Translation of Confessions of St. Augustin.—Oxford, 1838.

—these are the spiritual weapons, with which we are to attack and throw down the strong holds of Satan in our heart. But Plato had none of these. He found men with strong passions and misplaced affections, which he was to raise to their true object; to purify, not to extinguish. He had no better world to set before them at once, a world like that of Christianity, which the most uneducated mind may, under the blessing of God, realize so far as to fill up something of the wants of the heart, and prevent the entrance of sin. And though by his own reason he had conceived a system of truths very noble and very pure, which occupied the same place in his scheme of education as the great facts of the Christian creed occupy in ours, they could be reached only by argument and induction: and instead of setting down at once before a sinner the Cross, and the judgment, and the holiness of God, and a Being claiming and deserving all the better affections of our nature—Plato was compelled[1] to raise the mind by little and little from the world of sense in which he found it plunged, to that heaven of heavens, or rather to that one Spiritual Being, in whose essential nature all the types of goodness and beauty were contained from the beginning.

This is the true and equitable construction to be put upon his strong and frequent panegyrics upon beauty of external form, as the first object which is to engage the heart, and lead it on through moral beauty, and beauty of intellect, to the one true καλὸν—even God himself. He was necessitated to use with the heart of man the same process which he used with the intellect[2], when he endeavoured to raise it to the conception of a spiritual world by

[1] Convivium, Conversation with Diotima, towards the close.
[2] Republic. lib. vii. p. 264.

accustoming it first to the abstractions of number and quantity in geometry and arithmetic[1]; or which all men must employ in religion, supposing they had no revelation. They must begin with the physical world, which lies open already before the senses, and must lead the thoughts from it to a moral world, which lies at first unseen beyond it. And though a Christian, with the testimony of the Church as his first and easiest instructor, is bound to protest against this process, no one has a right to condemn,—to feel any thing but admiration for a heathen,—who has no other mode within his reach of attaining to divine truth. But the real cause, why we are startled at this plan in the gradual purification of our affections, is, that from unhappy associations, physical beauty to our minds is connected with but one set of ideas, and those evil. And, lost as we are in this age to high generalizations, we cannot understand the analogy, and more than analogy, which Plato, with all other great philosophers, delighted to trace between the conformations of matter, and the moral attributes of mind. With us matter is one thing, mind another; and between them lies a great and impassable gulf. With Plato, matter as it has been shaped by mind, the mind of its all-wise Maker, is a type and shadow of that mind,—a cast, as it were, from an all-perfect mould, rough indeed and shapeless to a careless eye that looks only on its exterior, but bearing in its minutest lineament the very impress of the original, to those who look within.

[1] See Iamblichus in Villoison Anecdot. Græca, lib. xi. p. 207. Hermias in Plat. Phædrum, p. 65.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I MAY venture perhaps on a future occasion to expand the preceding remarks from Plato's own statements. At present this long preface may be closed with a few hints for applying it to the interpretation of the Phædrus.

The student then must see in the person of Phædrus the type of a whole class of Athenian young men, as he will find a type of another class in Alcibiades [1]. The one is a voluptuous, literary, self-indulgent character; the other, spirited, energetic, and ambitious; but both are the victims of corruption under the influence, the one of the rhetorical Sophist, the other of that Athenian democracy, which equally in the eyes of Plato deserved the name of a Sophist [2]. The character of Phædrus is delicately touched. The careful reader will observe his effeminacy—his avoiding the manly exercises of the Palæstra [3]—his consultation of physicians, with which compare Plato's general contempt for quackery, *νοσοτροφία* [4], in the Republic [5]—his affectation in concealing his manuscript; the vicious direction of his thoughts in his allusion to those tales of heathen mythology, which lent the sanction of the gods to the worst sins of man [6]; and at the same time his ardent passion for literature; the

[1] Alcibiades I. Proclus in Alcibiades, vol. ii. ed. Cous., p. 288, et passim.
[2] Republic. lib. vi. p. 218.
[3] See Aristoph. Nubes.
[4] So in the Conviv. 176.
[5] Lib. iii. p. 108.
[6] Compare Republic. lib. ii. 72.

zest with which he enters into even the false ornaments both of Lysias' speech, and of the sophistical style as imitated by Socrates; his industry, his memory, his admiration for the talents of Lysias, and his general attachment to his master—feelings, wrongly indeed directed, but still capable of being turned to a right object. And these qualities must be compared with the qualifications required in the Republic [1] of those who are to become fit students of philosophy, and under a proper discipline may be raised to virtue.

So also the character of Socrates is brought out in many minute touches, so that even without any other dialogue the Platonic portrait of him would be completely preserved in the Phædrus. His irony and playfulness, strong dialectic powers, fondness for intellectual conversation, which would make even Lysias' speech "a bait tempting enough to draw him after Phædrus as far as Megara, though he walked up to the walls and came back again"—the principles of his dialectics, his sarcasms on the sophists, his high and noble morality—the ardour and affection, with which he engaged in the task of education,—the experiments with which he would exercise the minds which he was trying to convert and improve [2]—the supernatural voice of his genius, and even that little trait of personal appearance, which by its recurrence both in Aristophanes and Plato, was evidently indicative of great peculiarity of character—his bare feet, *ἀνυποδησία*, which probably made him looked upon with the same mixed feeling of curiosity and mystery, with which a dervise is received in the East, or a monk of old was followed when he came into a city—all these are carefully introduced; and if the student turns to the Apology, he will find them also sketched out there, as if to prepare the reader for the appearance of the chief actor in the future drama.

[1] Theætet. Phileb. lib. vi. p. 216. [2] Republic. vii. p. 262.

And if he is at all impressed with the high finish of Plato's writing, he will attend carefully to the minutest points. Ast has judiciously had the courage, even in the face of the seeming extravagances of [1] Alexandrian commentators, to allow that the names at least, and much of the scenery and by-play, in the Dialogues have a secret meaning—that nothing ought to be overlooked—and Cousin, though seemingly with some surprise, approves the remark. Thus the sensualism and oratorical style [2] of Lysias is indicated by his staying at the Morychian [3], probably a species of luxurious hotel, so called from the notorious voluptuary Morychus, who is so frequently satirized in the comic writers. And it is added, "near the Olympian," or the Temple of Jupiter Olympius,—Olympius being applied by a rhetorical flourish to Pericles, the "thunderer of the Athenian assembly," and Lysias having selected the style of Pericles for especial imitation. So also in the patronymics given to Phædrus [4], and perhaps in the very name Phædrus. All these are slight touches, but they fill an important part in telling the story, like the cobweb over the poor-box in Hogarth's print.

With these hints, and the history of the rhetorical school of sophistry constantly in mind, the student may then proceed to trace the course of the Dialogue.

It opens with a scene of little playful coquetry between Socrates and Phædrus, not unlike the quiet humour of Addison, which leads to the production of a speech written by Lysias, and which Phædrus is carrying off to learn by rote. To read it at leisure they both proceed to a retired spot on the banks of the Ilyssus. Perhaps many little points connected with the selection of this spot are now lost to us. But a lover of landscape painting will form a pleas-

[1] See Proclus in Alcibiad. I. p. 49. vol. ii. Cousin.
[2] Œuvres de Plat. par Cous. [3] P. 1. [4] P. 25.

ing Claude-like picture from the plane and the withy —with the fountain gushing out at the roots, the Ilyssus rippling along under the green bank, and the images and shrine of the nymphs, which Plato has studiously introduced, partly to form an appropriate back-ground to the voluptuous character of Phædrus and his manuscript, partly to imitate the rhetoricians of the day, and partly to prepare for the enthusiastic dithyrambic tone, which Socrates is to indulge, like the sophists, under the pretence of inspiration—*νυμφόληπτος*.

No one who has read the comic writers, or who knows any thing of the state of morals in Athens, will be startled at the subject of Lysias' speech. And if he does Socrates justice—the pure-minded though affectionate Socrates—of whom an illustrious Christian scarcely hesitated to say, "Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis," he will recognize at once his intention to set forth in a glaring light the profligacy of the sophistical school, not to palliate or encourage vice. Even the quickness, with which he previously turns the thoughts of Phædrus from the sensualities of mythology to a moral reflection, "I trouble not myself with these tales of Typhons and Chimeras, but rather how I may prevent my own soul from becoming such a monster," ought to be a sufficient security against any misrepresentation.

The speech itself is a full exhibition of the worst features of Sophisticism. It is elaborate and artificial in style, and, as before stated, its object is to recommend upon grounds of calculation and expediency the very worst forms of vice under the very worst circumstances of dispassionateness and coldness. How close a connection there is between such ethics and the fundamental scepticism of Sophistry, may be seen by the revival of similar tenets in many parts of the French sensuistic philosophy

previous to the Revolution. It is taken up by Socrates, not with a violent denunciation, for Plato knew the human heart too well to think of suddenly changing an inveterate character. And Socrates could not, like a Christian, stand before a sinner, as the minister of God, and threaten vengeance. Phædrus and himself were both heathens. And the seeming accommodation which he practises, and which would be unpardonable now, was then at least not a compromise of positive duty. He commences a speech on the same subject, in the florid, rhetorical, dithyrambic style, with which Gorgias and his followers had captivated the Athenian youth. And by degrees, without quitting his subject, he slides into a striking and affecting picture of the miseries and degradation of vicious affections, gradually lowering his assumed enthusiasm, and sinking from "dithyrambics into simple solemn strains[1]," ἔπη, till he appears almost in his real character as the grave, pathetic, earnest warner and teacher of the young. The skill with which this is managed, without any destruction of dramatic effect, or interruption to the easy flow of the dialogue, is admirable, and must remind attentive readers of some of the most interesting peripateiæ in the Greek tragedies. Phædrus is delighted. The speech closes to his great regret, and it is evident, from a few observations, that some little effect has been produced in sobering his mind; but still the vicious tendency predominates. And Socrates prepares to depart. When he is about to cross the Ilyssus, the voice of his genius bids him return. He

[1] It is singular that critics, who have mistaken these dithyrambics for serious writing, should have overlooked Aristotle's account of them. [Rhetor. iii. 67.] Speaking of such a style he says, it should never be used except either when the subject is impassioned, ἢ μετ' εἰρωνείας, ὅπερ Γοργίας ἐποίει, καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ Φαίδρῳ.

had spoken of affection—of that which an apostle has told us is the special attribute of God—"God is Love" —he had spoken of this without discrimination, as wholly a sinful and impure thing. And he prepares to recite a palinode. Not to lose his hold upon the attention and imagination of Phædrus, and to secure him by the same attraction of eloquence, with which Lysias had tempted him to vice, he still adopts the rhetorical, sophistical style; and the elaborate distinctions, terse clauses, short maxim-like sentiments, γνωμίδια, etymologies, musical but monotonous rhythm, harsh compound words, and high-flown diction, which marked the oratory of Protagoras[1]. And under this form he introduces a bold, figurative, picturesque, but somewhat extravagant myth, containing all the main parts of his own philosophy, and probably that of Pythagoras; at least so much as stood to his system as *the doctrines of religion stand to us.* He asserts, though under the paradoxical name of madness, the fact of inspiration from heaven[2]. He fixes the immortality of the soul[3]. He acknowledges the existence of a race of gods, between man and the one Supreme Being, whom he recognizes also in the Republic, and Laws, and Timæus, under whose immediate influence man is placed, and who occupy in his celestial hierarchy the place of angels. How prominent this doctrine became, when Platonism was revived in Alexandria, and subsequently, when it was made the foundation of astrology, need not be pointed out. He lays down the great law of moral retribution in a future state, and the necessity of self-denial and constant exertion in this to fit ourselves for that state. That he should not have fixed a consummation of all things, and the final sealing of our

[1] See these peculiarities marked out carefully in the Nubes of Aristophanes, ver. 316, 320, 322, 337, 665, 740.

[2] See Repub. Ion. [3] See Phædrus.

fate after death, but have supposed a succession of existences, moving in a circle from life into death, and from death into life, like a procession on a stage, passing round behind the scenes, and coming on again, (though this is the fundamental error of Plato's theology,) will not be surprising to those who have examined the almost insurmountable difficulties connected with this subject previous to revelation [1].

Then follows a summary of his moral and intellectual system, thrown into the figure of the spirit guiding its pair of steeds in a winged car [2], and

[1] "Reason," says Bishop Butler, (Anal. c. 2, p. 57,) "did, as it well might, conclude that it should, finally and upon the whole, be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked: but it could not be determined upon any principles of reason, whether human creatures might not have been appointed to pass through other states of life and being, before that retributive justice should finally and effectually take place. Revelation teaches us, that the next state of things after the present is appointed for the execution of this justice: that it shall be no longer delayed; but the *mystery of God*, the great mystery of his suffering vice and confusion to prevail, *shall then be finished;* and he will take to him his great power and will reign, by rendering to every one according to his works."

[2] The metaphor is an obvious one. But the resemblance between the following passage from one of the Hindoo sacred books, (the Rub'h-opunishud of the Ujoor Ved), and the idea of Plato, is striking:—

"Consider the soul as a rider, the body as a car, the intellect its driver, the mind as its rein; the external senses are called the horses, restrained by the mind; external objects are the roads: so wise men believe the soul united with the body, the senses, and the mind, to be the partaker of the consequences of good or evil acts. If that intellect, which is represented as the driver, be indiscreet, and the rein of the mind loose, all the senses under the authority of the intellectual power become unmanageable; like wicked horses under the control of an unfit driver. If the intellect be discreet, and the rein of the mind firm, all the senses prove steady and manageable, like good horses under an excellent driver. He who has not a prudent intellect, and steady mind, and who consequently lives always impure, cannot arrive at

mounting in its disembodied state up to the region of the intellectual world; there contemplating the archetypal ideas of all created things, and bringing back faint reminiscences of those glorious scenes, when it descends into the prison of the flesh. And however wild and unintelligible such a theory may sound to ears unaccustomed to a deep philosophy, a thoughtful, humble-minded student will at least suspect that Plato had not formed it in a vision, and that it may be (which we need not hesitate to pronounce it) a parallel to some of the most positive, though mysterious, facts of Christianity. He will also recognize in this part that fundamental truth in morals, which Plato illustrates in the seventh book of the Republic, that education is not the implanting of new affections in the mind, but the withdrawing those which are inherent universally in man's nature from evil objects to good [1]—that our sense of all things lovely and all things honourable, and the affections which follow the perception, come to us from God, and are to be cherished as the best of his gifts—that "reverence, and honour, and awe are due to them," as being stamped with the image of their Maker; that to gaze on such things only with an eye of earth, seeing nothing but outward matter, and profaning that body which is the shrine of an immortal soul with thoughts

the divine glory, but descends to the world. He who has a prudent intellect and steady mind, and, consequently, lives always pure, attains that glory from whence he never will descend. Man who has intellect as his prudent driver, and a steady mind as his rein, passing over the paths of mortality, arrives at the high glory of the omnipresent God."—Translation of the principal books, passages, and texts of the Veds, by Rajah Rammohun Roy. 2nd Edit. p. 69.

The resemblance is still more striking when it is remembered that the knowledge of God, as he is, forms under both systems the end and perfection of man, though it is a speculative knowledge in Hindooism, and a practical in Platonism.

[1] Repub. l. vii. p. 256.

only fit for brutes that perish, is a deadly sin against our Maker and ourselves; but that to live without affection, without any passion for that beauty, of which the fountain-head is the eternal essence of God, and its stream from thence flows down over the whole universe of things, even to the skirts of the robe of nature, even to the dead forms of matter, is to live a poor, perishable life, from which nothing great or noble can ever come—*θνητά τε καὶ φειδωλὰ οἰκονομοῦσα, ἀνελευθερίαν τῇ φίλῃ ψυχῇ ἐντεκοῦσα*[1].

In all this statement, strong as the language is, and figurative, and adapted to the corrupt mind of Phædrus, and the lamentable circumstances of the age[2], *τάτε ἄλλα καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἠναγκασμένη ποιητικοῖς τίσι διὰ Φαῖδρον εἰρῆσθαι*[3], there is but one part which needs apology. It is unnecessary to point it out; and let the excuse be, that it holds out a hope of heathen repentance and amendment to a heathen sinner.

The myth now closes; and Phædrus, hanging with delight on its rhetorical beauties, and in some degree also touched by its moral tendency, is in a fit state to be led on to a more sober and grave inquiry into the real nature of that rhetorical art, by which Lysias had fascinated him, and drawn his affections from the true and elevated objects, which Socrates has unveiled to him, to a miserable and degrading voluptuousness. Whoever compares the tone of Phædrus' few words now with his previous remarks, will observe the difference. And "as the sun is still at its height, and the cicadæ chirping over their heads in the noon-day heat, seem to invite them to continue

[1] Proclus in Alcib. p. 230.

[2] For the skill with which Plato would suit his mode of teaching to the character whom he addressed, see Proclus in Alcibiad. 316. Vol. ii. Cousin.

[3] Phæd. p. 43.

in the shade," Socrates proceeds to point out first the absurdity of a rhetoric which has not its basis in truth—which is to please the ear and inflame the mind, but without any communication with the reason; and then he passes on to perhaps the most singular, and to modern ears the most paradoxical, part of the dialogue; that which relates to the art of writing, as an instrument for conveying knowledge. It is unnecessary to remind the reader that the profligate speech of Lysias was the type of a new kind of popular written literature, the first which had made its appearance in Athens—probably in the world—that oral authoritative catechetical teaching was the original form of education—that poetry committed to memory was the only popular literature admissible under such a state of things—that when written compositions were at first introduced, they were looked on with contempt[1]; and that if they were intended for the popular ear, they still retained even in prose a strong poetical impress; and if they were scientific, they were framed as memoranda, heads of lectures, condensed summaries of information, which oral teaching was to expand.

In the present day, in this country, we have reached the opposite extreme. Our whole teaching, it almost seems to be supposed, ought to be through writing. The supposition is an absurdity, but the principle is practically maintained. Our histories, philosophies, sciences, arts, politics, taste, theology, all imaginable subjects, are transformed into light reading, compressed into duodecimos, spread through the country by circulating libraries, and laid before every reader of every description in the same guise, and with no other power of interpretation but the fancy, or will, or knowledge of the individual. As books, which every one is to

[1] Phæd. p. 44.

read, must be palatable to every one, amusement is the great object of authors. And as the very notion of a popular written literature, extending to grave and profound subjects, implies that the people are fit judges of grave and profound subjects, the whole business of deciding on the truth or propriety of doctrines has been transferred from the teacher to the taught. I have no wish to fix the observation on any one branch of our studies (one will necessarily occur to every thoughtful reader). They apply equally to all. But let Plato's own words be examined, and see if they do not contain a striking prophecy of consequences, which he anticipated from an abuse of the art of writing; and which, had he lived to see the abuse of the art of printing, he would have witnessed in a tenfold degree. It is not said that writing and printing are not good—are not blessings; but it is said by Plato, and must soon be perceived by all, that when their use is misunderstood, when they are taken apart from a controlling personal authority, when they are indiscriminately applied, when men are taught to look to them as the primary vehicles of knowledge, and conservators of truth, the mischief is incalculable. The passage is long, but it deserves to be quoted accurately.

"I have heard, says Socrates, that somewhere about Naucrates in Egypt there lived one of the ancient gods of that region, the same to whom the bird which they call Ibis is consecrated, and whose name was Thoth. He was the first to invent arithmetic and calculation, geometry and astronomy, with chess and dice, and, above all, letters. At that time also there was a king of the whole of Egypt named Thamuz, who dwelt in the great city, which the Greeks called Egyptian Thebes, and the god of it Ammon. To this king Thoth came, and exhibited his contrivances, with a recommendation that they should be diffused generally among the Egyptians. Thamuz proceeded to ask the use of each, and as Thoth described it, he praised or censured it. Many were his

remarks on each contrivance, some favourable and others not. But when the letters were produced, 'This discovery,' said Thoth, 'O king, will make the Egyptians far wiser, and their memory far better than it is at present. It has been invented as an infallible recipe for the preservation of knowledge and truth.' 'Most clever Thoth,' replied the king, 'one man may invent an art, but another may judge better what good or harm it will do to those who practise it. And now you, as the father of letters, from fondness for your own work, have given of them precisely the reverse of their real character. For this invention of yours will destroy instead of strengthening the memory of those who learn it, since they will neglect to exercise their minds, trusting to the external written symbols, and not rousing themselves to internal recollection. It is therefore a recipe not for retaining knowledge in our minds, but for recalling it when lost. *And you are providing for disciples a show of wisdom, but not the reality. For hearing a variety of information, without any real instruction, they will seem to possess general knowledge, while in reality the greater part will have no knowledge at all, and consequently will be intolerant of others, and very troublesome people to deal with, with an affectation of wisdom and nothing more*[1]. He, therefore, who thinks to leave behind him any art or science consigned to writings, and he again who receives it, as if any knowledge could be transmitted with clearness, and fixed by letters, must be a very simple-minded person—*πολλῆς ἂν εὐηθείας γέμοι*; and in truth knows nothing, if he thinks that written words can answer any other purpose than to recall facts committed to writing to the mind of one acquainted with them before.

"For writing, Phædrus, is attended with another evil also, and in this respect it resembles animal-painting; for the creatures of that art stand before us as if they were alive; but if you ask them what they mean, they look very grave and hold their tongues—*σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγᾶ*. And so it is with letters. You may fancy

[1] *σοφίας δὲ τοῖς μαθηταῖς δόξαν οὐκ ἀλήθειαν πορίζεις. πολυήκοοι γάρ σοι γενόμενοι ἄνευ διδαχῆς, πολυγνώμονες εἶναι δόξουσιν· ἀγνώμονες, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλῆθος, ὄντες, καὶ χαλεποὶ ξυνεῖναι· δοξόσοφοι γεγονότες ἀντὶ σοφῶν.*

they speak like sensible things, but if you want further information, and ask what they said, they give again and again only one and the same answer. And when once they are written down, they roll about in every direction, all words alike passing current among those alike who understand them, and those whom they do not concern. They cannot know to whom they should speak, and to whom not, but constantly getting out of place, and very unjustly abused, they need their father always to assist them. For of themselves they can neither retaliate on others, nor defend themselves [1]."

Again he proceeds;

"Is there not another kind of speech—λόγος—a brother, but a genuine brother of the former, and far better, and far more powerful? That which, with demonstration accompanying it, is written in the mind of the learner, having power to maintain its own cause, and discrimination to speak or be silent to fitting persons.' 'You mean,' replies Phædrus, 'the Word, λόγος, in the mind of the man of knowledge: that which has life and breath, and of which the written word would rightly be called the shadow.' 'I do,' said Socrates.—'And if a husbandman of sense were interested in his seeds, and wished them to come to fruit, would he gravely dig up a garden of Adonis, and delight to see them springing up in beauty within eight days?—or if he did this at all, would he not do it as the mere amusement of a festival?—while on the seeds that he seriously valued, he would employ the whole art of husbandry, and sow them in the fitting soil, and be content if in eight months they come to maturity? And shall we say, that he who possesses the knowledge of the just, and the beautiful, and the good, in the cultivation of his own seeds, is less wise than the husbandman? Surely he will not seriously sit down to write them with ink in water, sowing them through a pen with words which have no tongue to defend themselves, and are unable adequately to teach the truth. But his writings, if he write at all, will be as gardens of Adonis, sown as it were, and written as amusement, to treasure up aids to memory for himself, if he come to old age, and for others

[1] Phædrus, p. 69.

who follow in his steps. And he will be pleased with seeing them shoot out in delicacy and tenderness. And while other men indulge, each in his own recreation, in watering their minds, as it were, with feasts and wine, then he the philosopher, methinks, will spend his time in the amusement and relaxation which I have mentioned.' 'It is a noble play,' says Phædrus, 'compared with a very poor one; when he that can play with words, amuses himself with myths and stories on justice, and the other subjects which you spoke of.' Socrates.—'It is so, my dear Phædrus. And yet far nobler is that serious study, when a man, possessed of the true art of reasoning, τῇ διαλεκτικῇ τέχνῃ, finding a mind fit to receive his lessons, plants and sows in it his words, with proofs and demonstration accompanying them—words able to defend themselves, and him who planted them, and not fruitless, but having seed within them, from whence other words springing up in other minds may preserve the race immortal, and make the possessor happy, so far as happiness is possible for man.'"

Such were Plato's views of books as a primary independent mode of communicating knowledge. He did not exclude them, as Pythagoras did, and others of his predecessors, the Romanists of philosophy. But still less did he exclude oral instruction. He placed this foremost, as practically all men do,—as parents do who teach their children—as the church does, who sends her ministers to the heathen and the sinner, and not the Bible alone except as in their hands—as all arts and all sciences must do, which propagate themselves by imitation, and discipline, and practice under the correction of others, not by abstract treatises. He made books a reservoir of knowledge, to guarantee a future supply in case the living stream were cut off. And he employed them to remind men of truths which they had learned from the lips of their teachers; to feed and amuse their mind in solitary hours, and to be a check upon the corruption of truth, by establishing a second standard, a duplicate copy.

And with these views it is evident that he wrote his own works, and alludes especially to them in these general observations. They were to contain the same truths which his personal teaching contained, but which without personal teaching would be wholly useless. They were an amusement to himself, a sort of plaything. And thus we account for the irony, humour, poetry, and dramatic character of many of the Dialogues. But they were also a memorandum-book, μνημόσυνον, of his grand doctrines. And thus we explain the grave didactic tone of the Phædrus, the Phædo, the Republic, and the Laws.

What was true of individual instruction, was true also of political systems. Written laws, as he repeats again and again, can do nothing without education. And education, as he states in the Republic, by means of a popular rhetoric, without a sure and deep foundation in religion and philosophy, is an absurdity. Lysias, the writer of the speech, was also Lysias, the writer of Athenian psephysmata [1]. The rhetorician, or popular novel-writer, was also the demagogue of the day. Pleasure was his object in both capacities; and vice, the consequence of pleasure, and misery of vice. And the same reasonings, which were used to rescue Phædrus from the toils of his master, were to be employed in framing a polity as different from the democracy of Athens as the Church from the anarchy of infidelity. With Phædrus, they were not lost. And that mind must have followed very dully the course of the Dialogue, and be little sensible to its change from vicious thought and feverish language to quiet and moderated reasoning, with glimpses of religious truths and hopes of better things for the unhappy profligate, if he is not struck with the con-

[1] For a strong but not unjust character of Lysias, as a political character, see a note of Mr. Mitchell's Aristoph. Equites, p. 204.

cluding sentence of Phædrus, almost as with the calm, and simple, but solemn prayer, which closes our own Liturgy:—"In this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting."

It was Socrates, who before had proposed to depart, while Phædrus prayed him to continue the indulgence of his vitiated taste. Now it is Phædrus who proposes to quit the scene, perhaps full of unhallowed associations.

Phæd. "Let us depart," he says, "for the heat of the day is past."

Socr. "Must we not offer up a prayer before we go?"

Phæd. "Why should we not?"

Socr. "O beloved Pan, and all ye gods whose dwelling is in this place, grant me to be beautiful in soul, and all that I possess of outward things to be at peace with those within. Teach me to think wisdom the only riches[1]. And give me so much wealth, and so much only, as a good and holy man could manage and enjoy. Phædrus, want we any thing more? For my prayer is finished."

Phæd. "Pray that I may be even as yourself; for the blessings of friends are common."

Socr. "Let us depart."

[1] Wealth and sensual gratification being the two great objects of the Rhetorical Sophist.

CHAPTER XXIV.

After these remarks introductory to the Phædrus of Plato, I will now venture to ask his attention to another dialogue, the most interesting and important of the whole series. The Phædrus closed with a view of the use and nature of instruction by writing, or of what we should call books and literature,—a view which must be borne in mind in studying all the works of Plato. It represented them as secondary, and secondary only, to a system of oral education —as amusements for the author rather than his serious occupation—as aids to the memory in retaining or recalling what had been learned,—not as a proper instrument for originally teaching truths. It described books *in themselves*, and the habit of reading *by itself*, as pernicious rather than useful; as engendering conceit; as misleading the mind without being able to correct its errors; as inspiring a taste for multifarious information, and a vanity in displaying it, while real and profound wisdom was despised and unknown; and lastly, as creating an infinite variety of opinions left by themselves to wander over the world without any guide; and thus as finally destroying even the belief in the existence of truth, by the Mezentian process of tearing it into fragments. And whether or not the view is correct, may be easily decided by our own observation at this day.

And yet books in their proper place, and subordination, were full of value. And it was Plato's object to provide for his followers a philosophical literature, which should fulfil its purpose with the least possible

risk of being abused. His own exquisite taste, and that of the people for whom he wrote, induced him to exhaust in his compositions all the arts of eloquence, arrangement, dramatic skill, picturesque description, vivid and interesting disputation, and as much poetry of thought, language, and even rhythm, as the chastened ear of the Athenian would bear at a distance from the stage. To guard them from superseding oral instruction, he threw over them an ambiguity and even obscurity, which render assistance absolutely necessary. They are, if we may venture to use such a comparison, the Scriptures of Platonism,—that is, the development, in a large and seemingly irregular form, of the grand formularies of his doctrines, which were given through another channel, and without which, as a key to his writings, it is by common confession most difficult, perhaps we may say impossible, wholly to understand them [1]. To prevent them from fostering that habit of indulgent, passive indolence, which reading without thinking naturally produces in the intellect, he so constructed them, that in all but a very few, and to a great degree even in these few, no subject is proposed without running up into a problem, and no problem is solved by the work itself without independent thought in the reader. To stimulate this thought he threw much, which he designed should arrest the attention, into the form of seeming paradox [2]. Origen, that man of "sin-

[1] "Antiphane, un des amis de Platon, comparoit, en riant, ses écrits à une ville, où les paroles se geloient en l'air, dès qu'elles étoient prononcées, et l'été suivant, quand elles venaient à être échauffées et fondues par les rayons du soleil, les habitans entendoient ce qui avoit été dit l'hiver ; car les discours de Platon pour être entendus doivent être échauffées, et comme fondus par les rayons d'une intelligence bien exercée."—*Dacier*, Doctr. de Platon, vol. i. p. 79.

[2] For the difficulty attending the explanation of Plato's writings, see Meiner's Geschichte de Wissensch. tom. ii.

gular acuteness [1]," has remarked of the Bible (may we venture once more to use the illustration without irreverence?), "that the Word of God has contrived by a species of economy, ᾠκονόμησε, to introduce certain stumbling-blocks, difficulties, inconsistencies, and seeming impossibilities into the History and the Law, lest we should all be led away by the unmixed attraction and charm of the outward statements, and thus learning nothing worthy of God's wisdom to impart, should entirely fall short of the truth; or not being excited to inquiry by the letter, should fail in obtaining the knowledge of the spirit [2]." And we all know how closely a belief in the easiness and clearness of Scripture, unassisted by instruction, is connected not only with contempt for the teaching of the Church, but with a lamentable insensibility to the meaning of the Scriptures themselves. Even in the mere form of Plato's works, a collection of separate discussions, which no one yet has been able to throw into a regular connected series, there is something which may remind us of the structure of the Bible, in independent and multiform treatises.

We know how difficult it is to fix the precise object of each portion of these, or to explain why one fact is inserted, and another omitted. We know also that some portions, especially the later, are far more full and explicit than the earlier,—that the truth may be

p. 699; Tiedemann, Præfat. ad Argument. Dial. Plat. p. 4; Tenneman, System des Platon. Philosoph. tom. i. p. 84; Schulzius, Commentat. de Summâ secund. Plat. Philosoph. fine. Helmst. 1792, p. 6; Sigonius de Dialog. fol. 35. Venet. 1562; Degerando, Histoire des Systèmes, vol. ii. p. 222.

[1] Butler's Analogy.

[2] Origen, Philocalia, cap. 1, where there are several other remarks on the use and structure of the written Word, which also are singularly applicable even to these human compositions.

traced throughout, but, to be seen fully, should be traced backwards—from the Christian, for instance, to the Jewish scheme; its lineaments at every step becoming more faint and involved—more buried in enigmas, and in a shell of outward facts—more reduced in compass—more imperfect in development; and yet even here clearly discernible by an eye, which has seen it written elsewhere, as Plato himself would say, "in larger and more legible characters."

It is scarcely safe to pursue the parallel for fear of irreverence. But that the most elevated human reason, in providing a written teaching for its followers, should have been led to a plan not wholly unlike to that, which the providence of Almighty God has been pleased to sanction, is perhaps no more strange, than the belief of the early Christian Fathers, that the same reason had by assistance from heaven reached the shadow of truths, developed in divine revelation.

I propose then to pass at once from the Phædrus, which was taken as a preface, to the Republic, which is acknowledged to be the fullest, most perspicuous, and most dogmatic exhibition of the Platonic philosophy.

CHAPTER XXV.

The first difficulty which perplexes a student in this dialogue is one, which occurs frequently in Plato—the division of the work into apparently two distinct subjects; so that critics have hesitated, which to assume as the real question under discussion, and what title the Dialogue should bear. It opens and closes with an inquiry into the nature of justice, and the whole intervening space, extending to three-fourths of the work, is occupied with a political sketch, which is professedly introduced as a mere illustration. The absence in the Platonic Dialogues of formal explanatory inscriptions by the author is one of their distinguishing features. It was not the intention of Plato to give a clue, which should supersede instruction, and deaden active thought. And much cannot be said for the ingenuity of critics, who have endeavoured to supply them. Stalbaum has referred, as we may do ourselves, to Proclus, and modern German writers, for a view of the controversy respecting the proper title of the Republic[1]. And even if there were no historical evidence to decide the question, it would be a waste of time to discuss it, as if were *possible* (the expression is taken from Proclus) for either title to be correct, which should exclude the other. But it is evident from Plato's own words

[1] Procl. Comment. ad Plat. Polit. p. 149, 309; Klenker, Præfat. ad Polit. Plat. Germ. Vers. p. 111; Tiedemann, Argument. Dialog. Plat. p. 171; Morgenstern, Comment. de Platon. Repub. 1794; Tenneman, System des Plat. Philosop. tom. iv. p. 173; Schleiermacher, Op. Plat. vol. iii. p. 1. p. 3.

in the Timæus[1], that he referred to the Republic, not as a mere ethical, but as a political treatise, just as Aristotle calls his own Nicomachean Ethics a political work; and the ancient writers, including Aristotle, knew it by the name Πολιτεία[2]. And though it is easy to understand how the sceptical individualizing tendency of modern philosophy, especially in Germany, should give an undue prominency to the merely ethical discussion, the whole scheme of Plato's philosophy points upwards to the political theory. The tie between them, avowedly put forward, is indeed slight, if illustration is the only purpose to be answered. But, as is usual in Plato, it contains within it a very strong and indissoluble chain—the chain, which, in both history and speculation, binds together ethics and politics, the individual and the state; making the man the microcosm of the State, and the State the development of the man, and which cannot be cut asunder without ruin to both.

But to this point we may return hereafter.

The next question for the student is, the position of the Republic with reference to the other Dialogues; and in this there can be little mistake. It forms, in the first place, one of a distinct peculiar group, which Plato has openly and carefully linked together —the Republic, the Timæus, the Critias, and the Laws. These are all stamped with a peculiar dogmatic character. The dialectic argumentation, which in the other works was intended to exercise the powers of the young reader, is now changed into a clear decisive enunciation of truth. The characters in the drama pass from the teacher and pupil into

[1] Timæus, Leips. ed. 1, vol. viii. p. 1.

[2] Aristotle, Theophrastus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch, Alcinous, Athenæus, Diogenes Laertius, Suidas, Simplicius, Origen, Justin Martyr, Eusebius; and, among Latins, Cicero, Macrobius, Lactantius, and Chalcidius.

grave and matured debaters [1]. The irony ceases. The quaint grotesqueness of Socrates' character is softened down and disappears; or rather the Silenus mask is dropped, and reveals the whole noble unaffected expression of the philosopher's heart and mind. And whatever was the labyrinth of reasoning before, the course now runs clear and open. To determine exactly the mutual connexion of these four Dialogues would require a long discussion, foreign to the present purpose. But the Republic exhibits an ideal view of a body politic; such, we must especially remember, as Plato earnestly longed to see established in his own native region. Athens was the spot, and the Athenians the people, to which his eyes constantly turned, when any hope arose of realizing his noble visions of human perfection in an age of corruption. It was here, he says [2], that Minerva established her state at first,—choosing it from all the earth as "the soil and the clime most fruitful in brave and intelligent minds,"—such minds as Plato required as the materials for his own polity. To restore the democracy of Athens to such a constitution, as heaven itself had fixed for it at first, he expressly declares to be his aim. And to revive something of an ancient spirit, some thought of better times and nobler deeds, than even those which drove back the Persian from the shores of Greece, and let loose a far more fearful monster upon them in the person of an unbridled mob,—to cover the severity of the satire on the existing state of things by a flattery, which would soothe the ear without injuring the heart—and to balance the mischievous adulation, with which the demagogue used to load the vanquishers of Xerxes, the Μαραθωνομάχους of democracy—he seems to have invented

[1] See Timæus, vol. vii. p. 5.
[2] Critias, vol. vii. p. 128; Timæus, vol. vii. p. 11.

the myth of the Great Atlantic Isle, the invasion of Greece by its armies, and the repulse of them by the valour of an ancient Athens—such as it was, before democracy corrupted it. This myth is partially developed in the fragment of the Critias. If it was ever intended to be finished, probably it would have been wrought into a finished portrait of the second of those four societies, which are sketched in the eighth and ninth books of the Republic, the Oligarchy of Wealth. But, as it has come down to us, we can discover in it little but a grand, gorgeous drop-scene to something —which we have lost. It may be, this was all which Plato required. And when sufficient vividness and reality had been given to the main fact, which he wished to throw forward, he might think it neither safe nor necessary to venture further into historical fiction [1].

The two remaining Dialogues are to be placed on either side of the Republic. The Timæus sketches out, as far as Plato would presume to do so by mere reason, the probable system of the universe, especially in its relation to God; or, in other words, a view of that city or πόλις—the Civitas Dei—to which he alludes in several parts of the Republic, as the model and type of the body politic on earth, and far nobler even than his own ideal polity:—καλλίω ἔτι ἔχων εἰπεῖν πόλιν τε καὶ ἄνδρα [2]—ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνάκειται τῷ βουλομένῳ ὁρᾷν, καὶ ὁρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίζειν [3].—And the Laws are an adaptation of the principles of the Republic, to a practical case, so far as it seemed possible to realize them. And if the two systems are compared, this will probably account for the chief discrepancies between them. What the Jewish polity was to the Christian, the Laws seem to

[1] In support of this, see the Apology at the beginning of the Critias, vol. vii. p. 126.

[2] Repub. lib. viii. p. 284.

[3] Ibid. lib. ix. p. 349.

be to the Republic,—a machinery for the government of man as he is, not as he should be—with his passions and vices requiring discipline, and without the aid of that perfectly wise government, which Plato acknowledges could scarcely be formed without a miracle. The miraculous gifts of Christianity, and the absence of them in the Jewish system, probably afford the best clue to interpret them both. And so in the two systems of Plato [1].

Without delaying, however, on this point at present, interesting as it is, the student will next have to fix the relation of the Republic to the other Dialogues. And even a slight view will show him, that it is the crowning work, the corner-stone of them all; and that it contains in itself the answers, however briefly, and as it were accidentally, dropped to the enigmas and problems raised through the preceding inquiries. If the discussion on Justice is opened in the Gorgias, it is completed in the Republic. If the immortality of the soul is dubiously proved in the Phædo, it is assumed as demonstrable here. If the Philebus leads the mind through contending theories of human happiness subjectively considered, and only hints at an objective good, upon which it must really be based, the Republic constitutes this grand truth the foundation of its whole system, making all goodness depend upon wisdom, and wisdom to be the knowledge of God [2]. The Parmenides, which by many little touches is connected with the Republic, is a dialectic development of the first principle of a polity, perhaps of something even grander and more mysterious, the co-existence of unity in plurality and plurality in unity—a principle denied both by the Sophists, who rejected unity, and by the Eleatics, who rejected plurality,—and which, how-

[1] See Leg. ix. p. 320, v. 138; Arist. Polit. iv. 6.
[2] Lib. vii. p. 270.

ever abstruse it seems, lies in reality at the root of all moral as well as logical systems. The Politicus and the Sophist in the same manner are examples of the dialectic art, on which Plato lays so much stress [1]. The Ion and Hippias find their real development, cleared from their subtle irony, in the beginning of the tenth book of the Republic. The doubts respecting education in the Meno are solved in the Republic by a direct theory of education. The Symposium is an analysis of the principle of human affection here transferred to a divine object. The Protagoras is placed in obvious contraposition to the Republic, as the Sophistical school was placed to the Platonic, in morals, and metaphysics, and politics. Even the Cratylus falls into its place under that main principle of the Republic, the existence of immutable truth—τὰ ὄντα, as opposed to τὰ γινόμενα. And perhaps no better framework could be found for a right distribution and arrangement of the Dialogues than the plan of the Republic, assisted by that of the Phædrus; the Phædrus containing the germs of all the others, as the Republic contains their results. These remarks, however, are thrown out merely as hints for directing the student; and we must turn to a question more immediately belonging to the Dialogue.

[1] Lib. vii. p. 272.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE first object which attracts attention in this, as in all other works of art, is the outward form. In all *higher* works of art it is the last which is understood. Until we feel the sentiment intended to be expressed by a picture, we cannot read rightly either its colouring or its drawing. Till we know the rationale of a building, we are no fit judges of its architecture. And in the same manner, to appreciate the exquisite skill, with which Plato throws his thoughts into shape, and groupes and drapes his characters, we must understand his internal theory. Again and again it must be repeated, that the scenery, the stage decoration of Plato's Dialogues, has an essential inherent conformity to the subject matter. Modern writers of dialogues think no more of this than the monopollologist, who hires a stage, and makes his appearance with a green baize table and pair of wax candles in the midst of a canvas forest, or a set of furbelowed waves. They propose to say something: they fancy it will be more intelligible, perhaps even suppose it is more lively, if said by another person than by themselves, and by two instead of one: and then, as this seesaw must have a locality, they stitch on at the beginning a "purple patch," generally of scenery or anecdote, which with equal propriety suits any subject, and only distracts the eye without assisting the thought. But nothing of this kind is found in Plato. The place, the persons, are all in harmony with the plot of the argument, and help to unravel it. Every touch contains its idea;

and in some Dialogues, as in the Parmenides, this may be traced even in the apparent unmeaningness of a most elaborate and artificial introduction. The real object may be difficult to find; but so much pains, such forced contrivance—by such a writer as Plato—could not be employed for nothing.

The two points of chief importance in the external form of the Republic are, first, the scene, and then the characters. And here also as in the Phædrus, and especially in the Parmenides, the Alexandrian commentators[1] have carried the grand truth, that every touch in Plato has a meaning, into a minute metaphysical allegory, as surprising in its ingenuity, as, we fear it must be pronounced, unfounded, both in its principle and application. Perhaps the following suggestion may seem liable to the same charge. But, agreeing with the Neo-Platonists in the necessity of some key, it takes for that key, not a metaphysical theology, which never occupied a prominent place in Plato's system, but the practical view which he took of the Athenian democracy, and his efforts to reform it.

It is remarkable that the whole of the Republic, ten books in length, is put into the mouth of Socrates, and supposed to be repeated at a sitting, as the narrative of a conversation held the preceding day. We learn this from the opening of the Timæus. Something of the same kind, but even more singular, is found in the Parmenides, where a young gentleman, named Antiphon, probably a half-brother of Plato, and devoted to the pursuits of the stable, is found by some morning visitors in the act of arranging with a harness-maker about the mending of a bit; and is induced by them, with little difficulty[2], to repeat,

[1] See Proclus Comment. in Polit. Comment. in Parmenid.
[2] Parmenid. vol. vii. p. 148.

word for word, a long and most mysterious dialogue, which many years back he had learned from Pythodorus, who had heard it pass between Zeno, and Parmenides, and Socrates, on the logical and metaphysical analysis of unity and being. With the Parmenides, however, we are not concerned at present. The key to the form of the Republic is probably to be found in the wish to extricate Socrates from the perplexities and labyrinths of controversy, when taking the gravest character which a philosopher can assume, that of a religious and civil legislator; and to place him free and independent, that the flow of his thoughts may follow their course in quiet, undisturbed dignity, like Virgil's bird escaped from the cave,—

> " Mox aëre lapsa quieto
> Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas."
> *Æneid.* v. 215.

A difference of this kind is easily perceptible in the tone of the eristic and that of the dogmatic dialogues. The whole spirit of the philosophy seems to have escaped like a stream from a narrow rocky channel, and to spread itself out calmly and clearly to the light. Proclus has made the same remark. Perhaps also Plato might have a meaning in fixing the dialogue on two days; the first, when it took place, was the festival of the Bendidea; the second, when it was repeated, was the Panathenæa, the same festival, on which the Parmenides is placed. He expressly connects the higher subject with the occasion of the Panathenæa in the Timæus—ὃς τῇ τε παρούσῃ τῆς θεοῦ θυσίᾳ διὰ τὴν οἰκειότητα ἂν πρέποι μάλιστα [1], and the lower with the Bendidea in the

[1] Timæus, vol. vii. p. 15.

Republic[1]—*ταῦτα δή σοι, ἔφη (ὁ Θρασύμαχος), ὦ Σώκρατες, εἱστιάσθω ἐν τοῖς Βενδιδείοις.* Proclus has not lost sight of the trait. Now the Bendidea[2] were a Thracian festival in honour of the goddess Diana, or, in the Thracian language, Bendis. It typified to the eye of Proclus the influx of a deluge of barbarism and confusion—*βαρβαρικοῦ κλύδωνος*—into the region of the divine unity[3]. May it not rather hint at that, which Plato evidently regarded as the source of all moral and political evil, and the very contradictory of which is made by him the keystone and crowning point of his political system—I mean the confusion in religious doctrines, which had crept into Athens by the abandonment of what Plato so repeatedly and energetically supports, its hereditary and national worship, and by the admission into its bosom of the creeds and ceremonies of all countries? Strabo[4] notices this tendency in Athens, as being a standard subject of satire on the nation; and Plato might well compare the novelty of the ceremonies on the Bendidea—*ἅτε νῦν πρῶτον ἄγοντες*[5]—*καινόν γε τοῦτο*—with the ancient national feast of the Panathenæa, which concentred in itself the patriotic spirit of the Athenians—gathering to the city, as to a common home, its scattered citizens, and tribes, and colonies,—uniting them for

[1] Lib. i. p. 41.

[2] See Meursius, Græciæ Feriatæ vol. iii. Op. p. 822.

[3] Proclus Comment. in Timæus, p. 1; Muret. Comment. in Repub.

[4] Lib. x. c. 18.

[5] The mention of the *λαμπαδηφορία* will recall Plato's beautiful metaphor, so often borrowed since: *γεννῶντάς τε καὶ ἐκθρέψοντας παῖδας, καθάπερ λαμπάδα τὸν βιὸν παραδιδόντας ἄλλοις ἐξ ἄλλων.*—De Legib. lib. vi. No ceremony could be more appropriate to a discussion on the moral formation and education of man.

at least a day[1], and preserving in its mystic rites the connexion so lost, and so deplored by the philosopher, of Grecian mythology, with the traditional truths of eastern hierarchies and a primitive revelation. Let us keep in view the strong national bias of Plato's mind,—his longing to make Athens the seat of his moral and political reformation—his laying the foundation of his state in the high, pure, immutable truth of the unity of God—and his seeking for the support of this truth in the testimony of antiquity; and we may see no little propriety in his fixing the repetition of the dialogue on a festival, which embodied so many similar principles, and of which the presiding deity was the type of an ancient Theism. Minerva, we know from Plutarch[2], was the same with Isis; and the attributes of Isis are best described in an ancient inscription in her honour —Una, quæ es omnia."

The locality of the Dialogue, as it first took place, may also be noticed. Themistius speaks of Plato lecturing himself in the Piræus, whither he was followed by a confluence of people from the city, the country, the vineyards, and even the silver mines. They listened to him with attention until he entered on his doctrine of the one true Good,—the very doctrine which is made the corner-stone of the Republic,—and then their heads became confused—ἐλιγγίασε ὁ πολὺς ὅμιλος, and they gradually melted away, leaving him alone with his friends[3]." The point has not escaped the ingenuity of Proclus. He makes the Piræus a type of those confines of the intellectual world most near to the chaos of matter, and therefore to the seat of evil,—τοῖς ἐσχάτοις καὶ

[1] Meursius, Panathenæa, Opp. vol. ii. 556.
[2] In Iside et Osirid.
[3] Themist. Orat. xxi. p. 245.

προσύλοις [1],— and thus makes it an appropriate stage for the exhibition of a theory, which was to recall the soul of man from disorder and darkness into order and light [2]. Perhaps a similar ingenuity might also apply this trait to our own more practical view. The Piræus was the focus of every evil which had gathered round the Athenian democracy. It was the seat of the overgrown ἐπιθυμίαι of the body politic—the great mart of luxuries—the resort of strangers—the usual residence, it would seem, of those who sought in life only for indulgence of all kinds—and the refuge of that well-known curse of the state, over which both poet and philosopher indignantly lamented, the ναυτικὸς ὄχλος [3]. It was the fit type of every thing which Plato in the Republic proposed to rectify.

Another explanation must not be omitted of the assignment of such a voluminous narrative to Socrates, as in the Parmenides to Antiphon, in the Phædo to Phædo himself, and in the Convivium to Apollodorus (where, by the bye, there is precisely a similar circuitous mode of reaching the narrative with that in the Parmenides). One of the chief intellectual faculties, which Plato, like other ancient philosophers, proposed to exercise and develope, was memory [4]—μνημονικὴν αὐτὴν ζητῶμεν δεῖν εἶναι—a faculty of importance at any time, both for practical purposes, and as exhibiting strength of mind, but absolutely necessary in the deficiency of books; and the decay of it, which he anticipates from the multiplication of a written literature, he laments over in the Phædrus. Undoubtedly, if the specimens given by him in the above Dialogues are anything like fair samples of the

[1] See also Muretus, Comment. in Plat.
[2] Proclus, Comment. in Timæum, 1.
[3] Meursius, Piræus, Op. vol. i. p. 542.
[4] Nubes, v. 465, et passim; Repub. lib. vi. p. 210.

average powers of memory exhibited in his own day, they would put modern students sadly to the blush. We can scarcely imagine a greater trial for it than the dry, abstract, logical metaphysics of the Parmenides, in which, if one link in the reasoning fails, the whole chain will drop to pieces: and yet Plato does not hesitate to draw it out in all its length, and without a fault, from the mouth of the dissipated Antiphon, who had abandoned the philosophy of his youth for riding and driving—whose whole thoughts ran on saddles and bridles.

One more hint must be noticed. It is not till we turn to the Timæus, that we learn who were the persons, to whom Socrates made the narration. They are the same as occur in the Critias. But in the Timæus one without a name is said to have been present at the delivery of the Republic, who is then absent. "One, two, three," says Socrates[1];—"where is the fourth, who was with us yesterday?" "He is ill"—*ἀσθένειά τις αὐτῷ συνέπεσεν*—answers Timæus: "he would not willingly have been absent." Was this anonymous person meant for Plato himself? It is curious that the same reason is assigned for his absence in the Phædo. *Πλάτων δὲ, οἶμαι, ἠσθένει.* With this clue and no other, it may seem idle to throw out any conjecture as to the object of a trait so slight and worthless in itself, and yet introduced designedly into a work of consummate art. But the Timæus opens with obvious allusions to a practical design of realizing the principles of the Republic, by reforming both the polity and theology of the Athenians. Was Plato the absent person who had heard and assented to the theory, but wanted the nerve and courage—*ἠσθένει*—to carry it into execution,—who shrunk, as we know he did shrink[2], from encounter-

[1] Timæus, vol. vii. p. 1.
[2] Diogen. Laert. vol. i. p. 213; Platon. Epist. vii.

ing the rough battle with a democracy, and lamented over the crimes and ruins of his country—*ἀπαραίτητα πράγματα—ὑπερβάλλουσαν διαφορὰν δήμου*,—pointing out the path of safety, but not daring to enter into it at the risk of "banishment or death." The whole character of his writings is in unison with this trait of character, as expressly given in his biography. The confession, or hint of a confession, would come naturally as an answer to the question, with which every thoughtful reader must rise from the Republic —Why, with these views and principles, was Plato a mere speculative reformer? And the repetition of the hint recurs, just where we should expect it, in the prison, where his master Socrates was about to die as a martyr to reformation, and a warning to reformers[1]. It may be unwise to lay any stress on a suggestion, which rests on grounds so slight as to be almost none at all; but the principle of searching for a meaning in all these little touches ought to be deeply impressed on the reader of Plato. A painter has been known to confess, that in copying one of Rembrandt's portraits hundreds of the most delicate lineaments were taken off, and still the likeness was not caught: a microscope was applied, and another line, scarcely perceptible to the naked eye, was discovered about the mouth: it was transferred to the copy, and the expression came at once. And there is no line in Plato so slight as to be despised, or without its use in giving tone and expression to his writings, if we can but discover it.

[1] Plato once more mentions himself in the Apology (vol. i. p. 67) as bearing witness to the pure character of his master, but this only. And in the introduction to the Protagoras there is a young boy mentioned without a name, whom Socrates and his friend turn out of his seat—*ἐξαναστήσας τὸν παῖδα τουτονί*,—and by whom I cannot help suspecting was also meant Plato.

CHAPTER XXVI.

We now come to a part of the form into which the Republic is cast, of far more importance—the *dramatis personæ*. And the student must be expressly cautioned against mistaking these for such men of straw as modern dialogue-writers stuff and set up, when they propose a mock tilting-course of logic. The characters of Plato[1] are living persons, embodying definite principles; they are real characters, as in the old comedy, slightly masked, perhaps, and caricatured, but not disfigured; and though much obscurity rests on their history, there is enough light left to confirm the skill shown in selecting them. Five characters appear in the foreground of the scene of the Republic, Cephalus, Polemarch, Glaucon and Adimantus (for the two support their argument jointly), Thrasymachus, and Socrates; and to each is assigned the exhibition of a separate system of morals, and as necessarily connected with this, of a distinct scheme of political society. The first and a great part of the second book are thus to be considered a classification and review of the various schools of ethics; and instead of a vague rambling conversation on the nominal definition of a single virtue, they contain really a strict logical analysis and summary of the whole science, with a loose flowing drapery thrown over it to hide its formality. There are the school of feeling under its two branches of affection and ambition, the ἐπιθυμία and θυμὸς, de-

[1] The subject has been treated in a separate work by Groen van Prinsterer: Prosopograph. Platon.

veloped respectively in the forms of Epicureism and Stoicism—the school of expediency, of which we have admirable specimens before us in the present day—and the school which inevitably follows it, that of the unbridled lusts and passions of man; all the schools bad, all successively generated by the human will, when once let loose from the control of those ἰδέαι, or forms of law, objective, eternal, emanating from God himself, the only true object of philosophy, the only true standard of right and wrong, the only true rule of legislation and of government, under which Plato was endeavouring to reduce them.

Cephalus is the first character who appears; and though no reader of feeling can be insensible to the calm, simple portrait of the good-hearted old man, sitting by the altar, crowned with flowers, surrounded with his family, and discoursing on the blessings of a tranquil old age, and the hope of a future life, Ast and other commentators must not mislead us to think that this is the chief part of the picture contemplated by Plato, or that the scene itself is only "the rich and solemn porch to the interior of the work." Look more minutely into the details, and the character of Cephalus will come out with far more distinctness as the representative of a whole class of moralists, especially when compared with Socrates. The old man gradually released from his passions by their own decay—not by any conquest over himself; substituting in his age the pleasures of reason for the pleasures of sense—but still as pleasures, not as duties; claiming kindred and connexion with Socrates, the real and profound philosopher—but with an air of patronage, and for the secondary purpose of benefiting his sons, and evidently not respected by Socrates, who seldom visits him; surrounded by comforts and luxuries; disposed to gentleness and benevolence by natural instincts; born to riches, and

only in this way freed from avarice and from temptation to crime; looking on vice, and virtue, and another life, only in a superstitious reference to future rewards and punishments; centering all his duties to man in paying a debt, and forbearing to deceive, and his religion in ceremonial sacrifices—this is the character contemplated by Plato. It is sketched out, in Plato's usual mode, in the three first touches. Cephalus sits crowned, to denote his religious, but imperfect religious feeling; on a soft cushion, to mark the easy indulgent nature of his life; and on a low seat, *δίφρου* [1]—very different from the elevated throne, *θρόνος*, which typifies a lofty and commanding mind. He is the father (and the trait is most important) of Polemarch, the high-spirited, energetic, but unphilosophical character who appears next on the scene, *οὐκοῦν ὁ Πολέμαρχος τῶν γε σῶν κληρονόμος*; — of Euthydemus, who appears in another dialogue in the form of a sophist [2], and of Lysias, the profligate demagogue and rhetorician, of whom we have a sketch in the Phædrus. And when we bear in mind the genealogy of human characters given subsequently by Plato [3], and the effect which he traces of a low indulgent standard of morals in the father in producing a rapid degeneracy in the sons, we shall be satisfied that this family group is not without its symbolism. If we knew more of the private history of Cephalus, this might be still more clear. He was a rhetorician, probably of Thurium, and it may be suspected, both from the statement respecting the Cephalus of the Parmenides, and from a passage in the Euthydemus [4], that he was also connected with Ionia. He migrated

[1] Athenæus, lib. v. p. 192.

[2] Euthydem. vol. ii. p. 81. See particularly his extraction from Thurium; but the identity of the two may be disputed.

[3] Lib. viii. and ix.

[4] Euthyd. vol. ii. p. 82; Parmenid. vol. vii. p. 147.

to Athens at the request of Pericles; and Pericles, the demagogue and corrupter of Athens, as we have seen in the Phædrus, was no favourite with Plato. And thus we establish his connexion with the sources of the principal mischief, which Plato was striving to reform—with the low sensualistic philosophy of Ionia, the vitiated morals and politics of the democracies of Magna Græcia, and the popular sophistical politics of the Athenian republic, together with its false literature and debasing system of instruction [1]. Not that Cephalus exhibits the development of these seeds of evil—on the contrary, his character is, what the world calls, moral, amiable, and enlightened, free from gross offences, regular, respectable, pious; but it is the creature of accident and external circumstances; it has in it no root of principle; self-indulgence, however moderated by age, is the main spring; literature and philosophy are amusements; and virtue is not sought for, but followed as a path naturally leading where there is nothing to encounter, and much to enjoy. But the chief defect, which Plato wishes to mark, is the absence of deep philosophy, and immutable truth and law, as the basis both of morals and religion. To the loss of this he afterwards traces the first deflection both of the individual and of the state from the perfect standard of a polity, and Cephalus is the type of this deflection.

Cicero [2] has remarked [3] that Plato removes Cephalus from the scene at the commencement of the

[1] See Plutar. Orat. x. Vit. t. ii. p. 835; Taylor, Vit. Lys. p. 103; Muretus ad locum.

[2] Cicero himself is perhaps a fair example of the same character; Nicias is a still better; and perhaps the introduction of Niceratus, his son, as one of the bystanders, without taking any part in the dialogue, is intended to draw attention to the likeness.

[3] Epist. ad Attic. iv. 16.

dialogue, and he has himself done the same with Scævola in the De Oratore; but he assigns a reason not quite worthy of Plato, that Cephalus was too old to be present at so long a discussion. The trait in Plato has probably a deeper meaning. No sooner does Socrates lead the way to a logical philosophical examination of the nature of justice, than Cephalus loses all interest, passes over the argument to the rest, *παραδίδωμι ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον*, and pleads the necessity of attending to the sacrifices. Popular external religion was every thing to him; its foundation in truth and reason—strictness, and accuracy in its doctrines—were matters of indifference. He abandons the argument with a smile, *καὶ ἅμα ἤει πρὸς τὰ ἱερά* [1]. It must be unnecessary to ask the student to trace the same features in society around him. Our wealth, comforts, refinement, and civilization—our national sobriety, and respectable tone of public opinion—our religious feeling, let loose from the rule of a strict definite creed—the transference of all authority over us from a power and a law without, to a reason and will within us—our habits of indulgence without grossness—our literature, elegant and various, but destitute of deep thought—above all, as Plato would say, our loss of a profound, attested, immutable theology, have raised up Cephaluses on every side; and even the best-intentioned politicians of the day seem content with the prospect of raising up another in the person of the body politic. Their notion of the very highest perfection of a state reaches only to the point where Plato saw its first stage of deterioration, and the seeds of ultimate but inevitable ruin. They think society may be made to hang a few yards over the edge of the cliff, without being precipitated to the bottom. Plato thought otherwise; and the same quiet ironical smile,

[1] Repub. lib. i. p. 8.

half of compassion, and half of contempt, with which he obviously follows the good-natured amiable old man, would play upon his lips now, if he could listen to the political dreams of modern conservative reformers—dreams of a people ruling over themselves—of governments made not to clash with any prejudices or feelings of the governed—of laws representing the will of those, whom they are required to control—of national objects concentred in wealth, and national goodness and prosperity tested by the receipts of the excise and customs—of order and peace maintained by the decency of public opinion—of public opinion kept pure by the circulation of general sentiment—of virtue made so attractive in itself, in the expansion of the heart and satisfaction of the affections, that neither constable nor executioner will be required, except for a few hardened monsters—of education by literature alone—and of piety so vague and diffusive as to spread itself and live without a creed—or, at least, of a creed so self-evident as to contain no mysteries, and provoke no dispute.

But we must proceed. On the retirement of Cephalus the conversation passes into the hands of Polemarch, his eldest son.

When the student has reached the eighth book of the Republic, in which Plato commences his sketch of the declension of society, and of man, from a state as perfect as can be realized upon earth, to vice and ruin, he will find, that as the first stage, where a deep philosophy is lost, is typified by Cephalus; the second is one, in which the better part of our animal nature, the irascible principle, *θυμὸς* of the Greek Ethics, begins to acquire an ascendancy, and to destroy the balance of the constitution. And this character is personified in Polemarch. He is young, ardent, energetic, carried away by good natural im-

pulses, without discriminating them by reason—hating violently and loving violently; guided by poets [1], and poets of no good school, rather than by philosophers; thinking that to benefit friends and to revenge ourselves on enemies is the sum and substance of justice; and yet not without docility: willing to acknowledge his errors—quick in following an argument—always ready for a contest on the side of the cause which he espouses, ἕτοιμος κοινωνεῖν τῆς μάχης [2]—and wanting only the ἰδέαι of truth, and a guide and instructor such as Socrates, to realize a noble character. The careful reader will not overlook the playful violence and abruptness of his first address, the eager part which he subsequently takes in supporting Socrates, the earnestness with which he follows the debate, and even his name. He will observe also the kind and dexterous process, by which Socrates leads him onward to the truth; and which offers one of the most clear and compendious exemplifications of Plato's dialectical plan of education: a plan, which recognizes in almost every opinion a root of truth, and professes only to clear it and bring it out to light, by extending views too narrow, limiting too hasty generalizations, and compelling the mind to fix definitely the meaning of the language which it employs, and to reject its erroneous opinions by forcibly submitting them to the test of principles acknowledged to be true. In this way Polemarch is led on, step by step, to confess that his theory of justice or relative virtue is far from correct; that, though there is in the mind a principle of requital—

[1] Simonides is not introduced carelessly. His poetry and character were evidently of a bad tendency, and had prepared the way for the influence of Sophistical principles. See Aristoph. Nub. v. 1359; Scholia in Pacem, 696; Suidas, Art. Simonides; Athenæus, lib. xiv. 656, x. 457.

[2] Repub. lib. i. p. 14.

good for good, evil for evil (the Greek Νέμεσις), or, what modern moralists term, a sense of good and ill desert, which forms an essential part of our moral nature—still there are other modes of benefiting our friends than the young man's natural thought of fighting for them, and paying debts of honour; that "friends" is too lax a term—it must be *real* friends —*good* friends—(and thus we are brought near to the thought that goodness is the real title both to affection and respect); and then that the latter part of the definition must be left out, or the meaning of βλάπτειν, requiting evil on our enemies, be much restricted, for no good man can do evil to any one.

Still we are far from having reached the real definition of justice, or in other words, the true principles on which to rest the relative rights of persons, on which relative rights the system of society must be constructed. If Polemarch thinks for himself, he will be led to work his own way to it, now that his crude, careless, youthful impulses have been shown to be incorrect. And this is the point at which he would be left in any other dialogue. We must not pass from his character without pointing out its accordance with the sketch in Aristotle[1], of the irascible principle in man, listening to reason, but listening wrongly; zealous, open, and impetuous, but wanting in distinctness of views, and therefore in propriety of action. Plato evidently looked to such characters as the materials for constructing the second most important part of the fabric of his state, or as the nursery from which to supply his legislature and rulers—rulers both spiritual and temporal. Both Cephalus and Polemarch represent good natural characters unformed and undisciplined by reason. In Cephalus

[1] Nicomachic Eth., lib. vii. c. vi.

the soft, easy, indulgent affections and appetites—the Greek *ἐπιθυμία* — have developed themselves under favourable circumstances, and in the absence of temptation; in Polemarch the high-spirited, elevated instincts, which constitute the irascible principle or *θυμός*. But the latter principle is better than the former. There is a voice of conscience within us, telling us even to be angry, and sin not. But there is none to encourage or sanction, to do more than excuse, as relaxation, an indulgence in pleasure as pleasure. Pride, self-respect, even the principle of resentment, may be so directed as to be trained into virtues. Self-indulgence never can. The one is active; the other passive. One looks upwards; the other downwards. One contains a sense of dignity; the other none. One acts as a safeguard, not only on our lives and property, as a modern theorist has shown [1], but on our virtues, our improvement, our very Christianity itself; the other risks them all. One makes men bold, hardy, enduring, keenly sensitive to shame, alive to wrong, ambitious, aspiring; the other makes them effeminate, dull, grovelling, and weak. And these are the reasons why the one can be made to take part in governing both the individual and the state; the other cannot be raised beyond a slave. It must obey and obey only. But neither of them will Plato allow to be sufficient without reason [2]. You cannot trust to them. They have no permanence, no security. And

[1] Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments.

[2] *Καὶ γὰρ αἱ δόξαι αἱ ἀληθεῖς ὅσον μὲν ἂν χρόνον παραμένουσι, καλὸν τὸ χρῆμα, καὶ πάντα τἀγαθὰ ἐργάζονται· πολὺν δὲ χρόνον οὐκ ἐθέλουσι παραμένειν, ἀλλὰ δραπετεύουσιν ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· ὥστε οὐ πολλοῦ ἄξιαι εἰσὶν, ἕως ἄν τις αὐτὰς δήσῃ αἰτίας λογισμῷ. . . . . ἐπειδὰν δὲ δεθῶσι, πρῶτον μὲν ἐπιστῆμαι γίγνονται, ἔπειτα μόνιμοι.*— Meno, vol. iii. p. 270.

in this, Christianity confirms Plato, but with this distinction—that as Christians, we reach the knowledge of these immutable principles which give stability to opinion, and consistency to conduct, by a process far better than that of the heathen philosopher. We receive them whole and entire in our very childhood, as undisputed principles. He worked his way to them as conclusions from the experience and observation of man. We believe them true, because revealed; and revealed, because they come to us on a testimony, which our minds are disposed to receive without questioning, and which, when questioned, cannot be overthrown. He was compelled to rest them on other principles within himself, which no induction however wide, and no certainty of conviction however strong, could place wholly beyond the reach of those changes, to which the internal constitution of man, both moral and intellectual, is necessarily subject. And he could look to reasoning only, or the logical concatenation of principles, to strengthen and mature belief. We look to the action of the heart as well as of the head—to practice—to the steady discharge of duty even in the face of doubt—and especially to that exercise of prayer, which more than any other, forces the mind into a posture fit for the perception of truth, rouses it actively to seize, and realize, and hold fast the things which are unseen, and thus covers it, gradually, but perfectly, with a faint but indelible picture of a world of truth, as substances are now made to be painted on by the simple silent action of light.

But to pass on to the next ethical character brought upon the scene by Plato—the bold bad man without principle and without affection, personified by the Sophist Thrasymachus[1]. Mr. Mitchell has ob-

[1] Lib. i. p. 15.

served[1], that in the Dætaleis of Aristophanes, the representative of the modern dissolute times is also termed Thrasymachus. It was not unnatural that Plato should wish, as modern writers wish, to employ names for his persons, which indicated their character —as Phædrus, Polemarch, Timæus, &c. The singularity is that he should have found real characters with suitable names. And in attributing a meaning to the names, we are only following the best commentators. It must be unnecessary to point out Thrasymachus as the type of the tyrant state, and tyrant passion in the individual, which closes the series of constitutions given in the eighth and ninth books. If the touches in this sketch are not so delicate as those of Cephalus, they are more bold. His impatience to interrupt the conversation, and prevent Polemarch, who was not improbably under his tuition, from being won over by the influence of Socrates—his violent burst at last, *συστρέψας ἑαυτὸν, ὥσπερ θηρίον, ἦκεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὡς διαρπασόμενος*—the assumed dismay of Socrates, "who is nearly struck dumb with his savage outbreak, and unable to look him in the face"—his imperious imposition of rules for the answer to his question—his demand of money —his anger at the irony and power of the Socratic arguments, which points to the real cause of the persecution of Socrates[2]—his bold, shameless assertion of the lawlessness of will, and the goodness of vice—the dogged, sullen reluctance with which he is dragged to the conclusion of his premises—his fear of exposing himself too much to the indignation of the by-standers, when he finds that they are siding with Socrates—and the picture of him when thoroughly defeated, absolutely, "it being hot weather, in a stream of perspiration with shame and

[1] Nubes, v. 884, see note.

[2] Apolog. p. 47.

anger, and for the first time in his life guilty of a blush"—form one of the most masterly portraits in the Platonic Dialogues [1].

The attentive reader will at once refer Thrasymachus to the same class of theorists with Protagoras, Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles [2]. But they are not to be confounded indiscriminately together. There are many steps between the assumption of a subjective standard of truth and goodness in a mind morally disposed, and the yet inevitable issue of it in open profligacy where the heart is corrupt. It is possible to hold the sophistical doctrine, and yet acknowledge an universal perception of right and wrong, as Protagoras [3] did; or the criminality and moral responsibility of injustice, as Gorgias did [4]; or the natural preferableness of virtue to vice, as Polus did [5]; or the expediency of virtue, as Callicles did [6]. We may make man "the measure of all things," and yet philosophers cannot but draw certain general principles of morals and of truth from the acknowledged consent of mankind—and politicians will allow the necessity of exercising political power by some other rule than the mere will of man—and moralists will be compelled to listen to the voice of their own conscience, telling them of good and of evil—and even the lowest and most worldly mind will see that honesty is the best policy, and "godliness may be great gain." And these are the characters which Plato has drawn in the Protagoras and Gorgias. But Thrasymachus advances a step farther. He is the full-blown Sophist, uncontrolled, and undisguised; and exhibits the last stage to which sooner

[1] Ἑλκόμενος, καὶ μόγις, μετὰ ἰδρῶτος θαυμαστοῦ ὅσου, ἅτε καὶ θέρους ὄντος. . . τότε καὶ εἶδον ἐγὼ, πρότερον δὲ οὔπω Θρασύμαχον ἐρυθριῶντα.—Lib. i. p. 36.

[2] See particularly the Gorgias. [3] Vol. ii. p. 156.

[4] Gorgias, vol. iii. p. 17. [5] Ib. p. 44. [6] Ib. p. 59.

or later society and the individual must fall, as we see them fall, when they have once lost sight of a rule of duty external to themselves, and look for guidance to their own reason, their own experience, their own conscience, their own will. Like a man descending into a pit in a bucket, we may cling very fast to the rope, but the rope is descending with us. We have thrown off our moorings, and the tide is carrying us away, and all efforts to keep still near the land by remaining at the end of the vessel, will be vain. If there is vice already existing, it will soon spring up without restraint, and have full sway. If there is virtue either in the individual or the state, it will become weaker and weaker, and each successive generation will degenerate from that which preceded it—and, finally, a Thrasymachus will develope himself, denying all truth, all moral distinction, all moral responsibility, fearless, seared, and reckless in the indulgence of passion. This is the progress of society, which Plato wishes to describe in the eighth and ninth books, and which may also be traced in his several characters of the Sophists. Break the first commandment, which prescribes revealed truth as the foundation of religion, and the steps are sure and regular, by which murder, and theft, and adultery, and misanthropy, and avarice, will take possession of society. Can we not trace back our own present crimes and miseries as a nation to the hour, when first we abandoned the only true standard of external truth, by losing sight of a *Catholic* (not Romish) Church as the external witness of an external revelation? May we not well be on our guard against any theory however specious, however full of justice, and piety, and benevolence, and appeals to moral principles and an universal conscience, and the beauty and happiness of virtue (and there are many such circulating around us),

which has no foundation except in the mind of man, and which, though it approach as a Protagoras, will infallibly turn at last into the monster (*θηρίον*) Thrasymachus.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the ingenuity with which Socrates extracts from the lawless profligate, a general intimation of some of the principles, on which Plato's scheme both of morals and politics is framed,—of morals and politics, let us repeat, in mutual connexion,—just as we have seen the ethical errors of Protagoras, in mistaking the standard of morals, end in the uncontrolled passions of Thrasymachus, craving for indulgence by the establishment of a political tyranny. These principles are the following: that there is an immutable distinction between virtue and vice—that virtue possesses by nature an authority which entitles it to command—that this command and all power whatever is to be exercised for the good of the subject—and that the reward is to be found in itself, without dependence on external contingencies. But before these hints are developed fully in the enlarged sketch of a society, a fourth ethical system is introduced in the persons of Adimantus and Glaucon [1].

[1] A reader alive to the minute touches of Plato will be struck with the momentary, and only momentary appearance in the dialogue of a Clitophon, not noticed elsewhere; but who comes to the rescue of Thrasymachus. It gives liveliness to the scene by making the battle as it were more general, and relieving the principal combatants, as the Irishman proposed to do in the duel, by an interlude of a few shots between the seconds. Some assistance was also necessary to extricate Thrasymachus from his difficulties sufficiently to enable him to stand a second attack. In the Gorgias the same office is performed for Gorgias by Polus, and for Polus by Callicles; as if every descent in the sophistical chain of errors was the result of an attempt to escape from the difficulty of a false position by taking a lower ground. And that this is the natural progress of falsehood is seen sufficiently in

the history of modern speculations and modern politics. But Clitophon is to be noticed chiefly as referring us to a dialogue of the same name, attributed to Plato, but by many critics considered spurious. He is there again introduced as the friend of Thrasymachus (vol. viii. p. 262). The dialogue is of little interest; but Diogenes Laertius recognizes it as genuine; and Bekker has followed him; and it is satisfactory to see him putting a check on that hypercritical German ingenuity, which will end in mutilating, and perhaps in destroying, the canon of Plato's writings by imaginary internal difficulties, of which at this day we cannot be competent judges. The process now in use for distinguishing by internal hints the genuine and the spurious in ancient works is sufficient to reason an author out of the evidence of his own handwriting.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Adimantus and Glaucon are generally supposed to have been Plato's brothers, and half-brothers of Antiphon, the young gentleman in the Parmenides, who is so familiar with metaphysics and horses. And Plutarch has recorded the introduction of their names as an instance of fraternal affection[1]. All this however has been overturned by a late theory from Germany. Means, not perhaps very satisfactory means, have been taken to fix the date of the Republic at 430 or 431[2], A.C. Glaucon, it is urged from the testimony of Xenophon, may have been born about 428, and such an obvious anachronism must have been too gross even for the acknowledged licence allowed to a writer of dialogues. "Nostis morem dialogorum," says Cicero[3], in excuse for a similar liberty. The celebrated Hermann has proposed to remove the chronological difficulties both of the Republic and the Parmenides, by the easy process of finding for Glaucon aud Adimantus the brothers of Plato, two doubles, never before heard of, in the persons of two hypothetical uncles of the same name[4]. To an English reader it will seem an easier thing to admit any anachronism, however large, in works professedly not of history, but fiction—which

[1] De Frater. Amor. t. ii. p. 484.
[2] See Stalbaum, Prolegom. ad Parmenid. lib. iii. s. ii.
[3] Epist. ad Varr. de lib. Academ.
[4] In a Review of Stalbaum's Edition of the Republic. Darmstadt, Nos. 81, 82, ann. 1831.

every one knew to be fiction—in which living persons were introduced, who publicly protested that they knew nothing of the words put into their mouths, as Gorgias did of the Gorgias, Phædo of the Phædo[1], and Socrates of the Lysis—which, in ceasing to be fictions, ceased to be what they were intended to be, the exposition of a philosophical system in a poetical dramatic form—which were to be read by Athenians, who thought, with modern Englishmen, that history was an old almanac, and never troubled themselves, as we know from their orators, with occurrences ten years old, still less, sat down to calculate dates, or to scrutinize inconsistencies either in what they saw or heard, provided the immediate grouping of events satisfied the fancy. The Athenians probably knew no more the date of Zeno's visit to Athens, or the age of Cephalus, than they did in the time of Demosthenes of the Peloponnesian war; or than modern frequenters of circulating libraries know of the biography of Schelling or Hobbes, Kant or Cudworth. If indeed the introduction to the dialogue is a mere patch, and any names would have answered as well, provided words were put into their mouths, then indeed Plato might have taken the trouble to pick out the requisite number of speakers from the streets, and might have synchronized them without difficulty. But if he wanted for his purpose peculiar real characters to exemplify peculiar principles, and such a number of distinct principles as are required to be exhibited in the Republic (and this was the genius of the old comedy which he followed in his Dialogues), to have found a whole group ready-made in the family of Cephalus—Cephalus himself, Polemarch, Euthydemus, Lysias[2], Thrasymachus—each, to those who

[1] Athen. lib. xi.

[2] Thrasymachus is elsewhere coupled with Lysias (Phæ-

knew them, a living example of Plato's doctrines—and to have parted with it in dread of some minutest critic with his stop-watch and twelve-inch rule, would have been a sacrifice unworthy and unpardonable. If the anonymous fourth hearer mentioned in the Timæus is intended, as it was suggested, for Plato himself, this would at once settle the question. He would scarcely be afraid of introducing his brothers, where he was supposed to be present himself. And the shadows of uncles summoned up by the wand of Hermann may be permitted to return to their non-entity.

Why Plato selected his two brothers to take the part allotted to them, it may be hard to divine. But it would appear that there was something in their character peculiarly appropriate to their share in the dialogue. This share is very large. Cephalus has retired. Polemarch appears only once more, in the attitude of stretching out his hand, and pulling Adimantus to him by the cloak, then pushing him forward with a whisper, "Shall we let him go[1]?" preparatory to a demand that Socrates would enlarge on the subject of education and marriage. Thrasymachus has been silenced, and is amicably disposed[2]. And the remainder of the conversation through more than eight books is carried on between Socrates and the two brothers. They relieve each other. Now are we to suppose that all dramatic effect—all discrimination of character has ceased—and that the dialogue passes henceforth from hand to hand, without some rule more artist-like than that of mere alternation? May we not be able to discover some traits of character which may give point and vivacity even

drus, vol. viii. p. 61), and appears to have been an *habitué* of Cephalus' mansion; to his instructions, probably, Lysias and Euthydemus owed their characters.

[1] Lib. v. p. 162. [2] Lib. vi. p. 227.

here? And if the attempt seems fanciful, let us remember the canon of criticism laid down for the readers of Plato by one of the most judicious commentators on his works [1].

"Morum autem notationem in omnibus dialogis Platonis elegantissime adhibitam, sive ad ornatum referas, sive majus quiddam insuper auctorem istâ notatione quæsivisse putes, eam ego in compendio meo.... non negligendam esse censeo..... In Platonis dialogis, non disputatio solum philosophica exhibetur, sed dramatica etiam imitatio, neque igitur nexus solum logicus reperitur, sed ethicus etiam. Quum in illis igitur dialogis seriem sententiarum philosophicarum nonnunquam tam arcte copulatam cum illâ morum notatione viderem, quia moribus eorum, qui secundas dialogi partes ferunt, ejus qui in omnibus pæne quasi πρωταγωνιστὴς est, Socratis disputandi rationem et indolem tum universe, tum singulis locis toties definiri animadvertebam, ut morum notatione a reliquo orationis corpore plane resectâ, nec quodammodo significatâ in dialogorum Platonicorum adumbratione nonnunquam desiderari videretur aptissima singularum rerum junctura."

The Latin is obscure, but the criticism is most just. And one of its chief uses is to encourage a habit of thoughtful, accurate observation, in reading not only Plato, but any master of composition [2].

What then can we discover of Glaucon. Xeno-

[1] Morgenstern, Comment. in Polit. Platon. Præfat. p. 3. It is singular that he himself, in common with other commentators, neglected to illustrate and apply his rule. He says scarcely any thing of the dramatis personæ of the Republic.

[2] Sous le règne de Trajan ils (les Dialogues de Platon) étoient encore si estimés à Rome, qu'on introduisit une coutume, qui fut reçue avec beaucoup d'applaudissement. On choisissoit les plus beaux de ces dialogues, et on les faisoit apprendre par cœur aux enfans, afin qu'ils les récitassent à table dans les festins, avec les différens tons, et les différens gestes, qui convenoient aux mœurs, et aux caractères des différens personnages, que Platon fait parler.—Dacier, Œuvres de Platon, vol. i. p. 1.

phon[1] has recorded one solitary fact, that at the age of twenty he insisted on appearing on the rostrum, where he exposed himself, and was hissed. And no one could induce him to abandon his taste for a political life, except Socrates, who was aided in the task by Charmides and Plato. The anecdote is but short; but aided by the hints in the Republic, it becomes full of meaning.

In the first place Glaucon was a favourite pupil of Socrates. It is with Glaucon that Socrates went down to the Piræus. The favourite pupils of Socrates were remarkable, as we have seen, for high spirit, manly bearing, and other marks of the predominance in their character of the *θυμὸς*, or irascible principle. And whenever an allusion is made to this kind of temper, there is a direct address to Glaucon[2]. It might be suspected that he was passionate to his slaves, fond of contention, violent in temperament. And when we turn to the eighth book, p. 291, we find this expressly asserted. There are also no few indications of his being devoted to pleasure, at least in early life[3]. He takes singular interest in every allusion to the table[4], and to personal indulgences[5]; and there is a significancy in the allusion of Socrates to the proper functions of the physician, which might seem to imply that he recurred often to the medicine-chest to remove the effects of his easy living; that he laboured under what Plato terms *νοσοτροφία*, or a mania for quacking himself, instead of preserving his health by abstinence and exercise[6]. He seems to sigh over difficulties, while

[1] Memorabilia.
[2] See lib. ii. p. 67, 68; iii. 122; iv. 148; vii. 257, 256, 260, 263; viii. 291; ix. 333, 347.
[3] Lib. v. 176; iii. 105. [4] Lib. x. 371; iv. 153, 161; ii. 65.
[5] Lib. iii. 115; vi. 237, 241; ix. 340, 341.
[6] Lib. iii. 108.

he acknowledges the duty of surmounting them [1]. There are no symptoms of indifference to external advantages, but more than one allusion to a fondness for money [2]. A long and elaborate metaphor, taken from field sports, and addressed to him pointedly by Socrates, might suggest a suspicion of his inclination for them [3]. On reading on, we find that his house was full of dogs for the chase, and birds of all kinds [4]. And still nearer the end this taste is one of the features expressly marked in the character which is said to resemble Glaucon's—φιλόθηρος [5]. There can be little doubt that he was partial to music, or that he had been taking lessons from Damon. At least there are appeals made to him on the subject, and one or two metaphorical expressions and confessions of knowledge, which imply as much [6]. To poetry he was certainly addicted, perhaps without much discrimination; for whenever poetry is mentioned, Glaucon comes forward in the dialogue [7]. And we might not be surprised to find that he was a patron generally of the fine arts—perhaps a buyer of statues [8]; for illustrations are drawn from this subject frequently and pointedly; just as Aristotle, when he used so repeatedly the illustrations from the physician and the shoemaker, was thinking of his medical father, and his own fine slippers. That arithmetic also had engaged his attention is not improbable [9]. But philosophy seems to have captivated him most strongly, though without inducing him to follow it steadily and deeply [10]. And mixed with all this variety of pursuits, of which many hints are given [11], reappears the old passion for

[1] Lib. iv. 248; viii. 282. [2] Lib. ix. 348; viii. 291; vii. 250.
[3] Lib. iv. 143. [4] Lib. iv. 176. [5] Lib. viii. 291.
[6] Lib. v. 166; iii. 117, 103, 101.
[7] Lib. x. 369, 367, 357; viii. 290, 286; v. 190.
[8] Lib. x. 353; vii. 281; iv. 121. [9] Lib. vii. 260, 262.
[10] Lib. x. 373; vii. 271; vi. 237, 208; v. 197; iv. 165.
[11] Lib. vii. 273; v. 169; iv. 159, 157.

politics, of which we hear from Xenophon [1]. Two good traits occur, of no little importance in a pupil of Socrates, docility [2] and a good memory [3]; nor must we omit that warmth of heart [4], and susceptibility of the impressions of the beautiful, which both in the Phædrus and Republic are expressly said to be essential to the mind which is to be perfected by education. But the character as a whole is mixed and faulty. Great natural gifts [5] have been abused in early life. And though some hope remains of a devotion to true philosophy in more advanced years [6], Socrates seems always to have before him the image of the sea Glaucus (the name is to be remarked)—*τὰ μὲν ἐκκεκλάσθαι, τὰ δὲ συντετρίφθαι καὶ πάντως λεβωβῆσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων*—with its divine nature mutilated and defaced, and "shells, and weeds, and pebbles, hardened into a concrete around it [7]." And yet Glaucon had high qualities, and was a favourite pupil. "Dear Glaucon" is the expression again and again used to him, and him only. And whenever the ruin of a noble character is hinted at, or the struggle necessary for virtue, or the misery of sin, Socrates turns to him, as with a solemn warning and admonition, full of anxiety, but full also of affection [8]. We may conclude with an hypothesis, that he was unmarried. There are statements which seem to imply this. And all those parts of the conversation are placed in his mouth, which show the least acquaintance with domestic life, and with the true principle of family union.

Of Adimantus less can be traced. But his character is evidently contrasted with Glaucon's. There

[1] Lib. x. 369; ix. 333, 327; viii. 290; vii. 254.
[2] Lib. viii. 291. [3] Lib. viii. 284.
[4] Lib. v. 176; iii. 105. [5] Lib. ii. 58.
[6] Lib. vi. 227. [7] Lib. x. 373; iv. 155, 148.
[8] Lib. x. 378, 374, 387, 383, 368.

is less in it of high spirit and daring, and more of worldly prudence [1], with no great fondness for philosophy [2], or talent to follow it [3]; with little taste either for poetry or music [4]; and an aversion to that variety of pursuits, political and private, (the πολυπραγμοσύνη of Athens,) for which Glaucon was evidently remarkable. An attentive reader will observe that whenever the conversation turns on education [5], or the misery of an undutiful child, or the care to be taken of his first years, Adimantus's interest is roused, and Socrates turns to him pointedly. We might suspect that he had a child, perhaps an only one, perhaps one in whom his uncle Plato took an interest. And on turning to Plato's supposed will [6], we find him leaving his property to the child of Adimantus.

If there is any truth in these suggestions—(and that Glaucon's character was really such as is suggested, we know from the full-length portrait of his acknowledged counterpart in the eighth book [7])—we can at once account for the introduction of the two brothers, not merely to immortalize their names, but as dramatic characters, who might naturally draw out the conversation into that great variety of topics discussed in the Republic, and sustain it with historical propriety; and probably with a deeper feeling in Plato's mind, who, in his efforts to save those around him from the corruption of the Athenian democracy, could not have overlooked his brothers, and probably felt no little disappointment that, with naturally good characters, they were incapable of steady application to a profound philosophy, and were drawn off—Glaucon to his pleasures, and Adimantus to his busi-

[1] Lib. vi. 229; iv. 133, 128, 127, 126; ii. 71.
[2] Lib. vi. 214. [3] Lib. vi. 211; iii. 89; ii. 64.
[4] Lib. ii. 74; iv. 132.
[5] Lib. ix. 324; v. 163; iv. 133, 131; ii. 51.
[6] Diog. Laert. i. 188. [7] Page 290.

ness, as Antiphon, his half-brother in the Parmenides, had thrown away the labours of his youth, and betaken himself to riding. And there is a sketch in the eighth book [1] of the circumstances which lead to the formation of the Timocratical character that of Glaucon—a sketch so minutely touched, and closed with such a pointed address to Glaucon himself, that it is difficult not to suspect that it is a family picture—that Plato had before his eyes his own home, the good, quiet, retired father, the ambitious indulgent mother, the flattering slaves, and the bad society, which had corrupted his brother. And thus the Republic acquires a family interest, and the details of it are brought out into life and meaning, instead of being passed over as a mere useless shifting of names and persons.

It is unnecessary to say that the ethical system brought forward by the two brothers is that of expediency. Glaucon undertakes to recommend virtue from the fear of punishment,—Adimantus, for the hope of reward. Glaucon exhibits the views of the ambitious high-spirited man kept back from crime by the impossibility of concealment,—Adimantus the principles of worldly parents educating their children to be virtuous from interest. Probably from a natural delicacy, Plato puts into their mouths sentiments not their own, and which they avowedly repudiate for themselves; and he couples their names with a high panegyric, and a reference very touching to their and his own father Ariston. Thus the series of characters is closed. The two moral passions, the ἐπιθυμία and θυμὸς, are seen severally in Cephalus and Polemarch, subdued by nature, and nature only. In Adimantus and Glaucon they are controlled by worldly prudence; bartering, as Plato indignantly describes in the Phædo,

[1] Page 291.

pleasure for pleasure, and fear for fear, in order to become good [1]. In Thrasymachus they are let loose; and that a Thrasymachus is the natural and inevitable offspring and end of the other character, however far from it at first, and however specious,—that, unless morality is founded on a basis of high, immutable, divine truths, it must perish,—that these truths are the only security for man's happiness and perfection, whether in individuals or in a state,—is the great maxim which Plato would establish throughout.

"May it not be," he says in the Phædo, "may it not be, my beloved Simmias, that this is no right path to virtue, to barter pleasures for pleasures, and pains for pains, and fear for fear, and the greater for the less, like worthless coin? May it not be, that only one coin exists, for which to exchange all these—the knowledge of truth (φρόνησις)—that for this, and with this, all things in very deed are bought and sold—courage, and temperance, and justice; that, in a word, but one true virtue exists,—the virtue which is founded upon the knowledge of truth (μετὰ φρονήσεως), whether pleasures and pains, and the like, be added to it or taken away? But apart from a knowledge of truth, and bartered one against the other, may not such a goodness be but the shadow of a substance, the virtue of a slave, with no soundness or reality in it?

[1] Phædo, i. 119.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I HAVE dwelt thus at length on the dramatic circumstances of the Dialogue, which have been strangely neglected by commentators, not only as throwing light on its general character, and giving point and meaning to many portions otherwise obscure, but (to repeat it once more) as a suggestion not to overlook even seeming trifles in any of the works of Plato—and as a proof that the Republic, however visionary and enthusiastic it may seem, bears on it no marks of haste or carelessness. If the minor features, almost imperceptible to the reader, are so scrupulously finished and elaborated, what are we to think of the sentiments and outline[1]?

This charge against the Republic, of being visionary and enthusiastic, unpractical and extravagant, has been repeated from mouth to mouth, since the days of Aristotle, *τὸ περιττὸν, ... καὶ τὸ κομψὸν, καὶ τὸ καινοτόμον, καὶ τὸ ζητητικόν*[2]. And it is to be feared that in England it is too common for young students to judge of the work, in the absence of other commentators, by the laborious Brucker—a writer whose vast accumulation of materials gives to his opinion an imposing authority, but who, by the common con-

[1] For unfavourable opinions see Athenæus, lib. vi. c. ult.; Cicero, Epist. ad Attic. lib. ii. Epist. 1; Plutarch de Fortun. Alexand. tom. ii. p. 328. Francof.: Athenæus, Deipno. lib. xi. p. 507; Greg. Nazianzen. in Julian. i. p. 66; Theodoret, Curat. Græc. Affect. Disput. ix. Op. t. iv. p. 943, 937; Thomasius, Christ. Orat. Academ. p. 410, 420; Brucker, Hist. Critic. tom. i. p. 726; Arist. Polit. iv. p. 485. c. i. ii. et passim.

[2] Politic. lib. ii. p. 33, Bekk.

fession of the best modern philosophers, has shown himself little capable of appreciating or explaining Plato.—"Platoni Plotinoque judicandis parum idoneus[1]." But without criticising the criticisms of others, there is a mode of at once testing the soundness of political theory. Has it ever been realized? And this is the test which should be applied to Plato.

In the first place, then, there is nothing visionary in his sketch of the human mind—in his analyzing it into an intellectual principle, νοῦς—and a moral principle;—and again subdividing this into two instincts, the irascible and the concupiscent, θυμὸς and ἐπιθυμία. This is the recognized division of ethical philosophy.

There is nothing visionary in his assertion, that unless the intellectual principle, meaning by it the principle of conscience, as well as of the understanding, or, in other words, the principle by which we perceive truth, whether logical or moral—that unless this rules within us, our nature cannot be perfect, and must fall into ruin. No one can argue for the supremacy either of reason or of conscience, and ridicule this.

There is nothing visionary in his viewing as inseparable the individual and the social life in man, and thus connecting together a scheme of ethics and a scheme of politics. There is nothing visionary in his making the state only the development of the man. If, as he himself says[2], societies are formed "not out of rocks and stones, but out of individual characters," they will present the same phenomena, though on a larger scale. Citizens will class themselves by the disposition of mind which predominates in themselves, or to which they are subservient. The animal portion will become the servants, workmen, trades-

[1] Præfat. Creuzer. ad Plotinum, vol. i. p. 6.
[2] Lib. viii. p. 285.

men, manufacturers of luxuries—the courageous will wield the physical force of the nation—the intellectual will become the legislators, philosophers, and clergy. And such a division of the members of a state is far more natural and logically correct, than one made on the difference of their external pursuits, which Aristotle has adopted, or that of Coleridge, into the representatives of the permanent and the progressive principle in man; since permanence and progression depend on the moral principle itself.

Once more, there is nothing visionary in making the perfection of the state, as of the individual, to consist, not merely in the possession of these principles (for how could human nature be perfect without all its constituent parts?) but in their proper balance and adjustment. If human nature be, as Bishop Butler[1] says, a *constitution*, the very essence of a constitution lies in the adaptation and right subordination of its members. The wheels of the watch may be good, but the watch is not good till they are properly put together. A painter may paint in a portrait a good head, and good hands, and a good body; but if the head is where the body should be, and the hands where the head should be, the picture is a monster. We do not praise a man for having sensibility, or high spirit, or reason, separately, but for having them all, and each in its place. And we do not admire a nation for its wealth, or victories, or knowledge, if its philosophers are oppressed by its armies, and its armies are mere tools in the hands of its luxurious merchants. Right relations are in fact the sum and substance of all goodness and all knowledge.

And when we ask for the law which ought to regulate the relations of the political classes, the answer

[1] Preface to Sermons.

is—the same law, which regulates the dependence of the affections on the reason of the individual man—that is, the natural superiority of the irascible principle over the concupiscent, and of reason over both.

These views are so obvious and so consistent even with popular ethics, that we must look beyond them for the ground of attack, to which Plato's political system has been subject. And the first which will present itself is the doctrine of Ideas. That legislation should be conducted on principles of truth, morality, and religion, no one would doubt; or that truth, morality, and religion have a natural claim to the obedience of man. But when the axiom takes this form—that kings must become philosophers, and that philosophy is the perception of ideas—the knowledge of the one—the good—the beautiful—of unity in plurality, and plurality in unity—of that *which is* —τὰ ὄντα—then a haze comes over the eyes of the indolent reader, as over the mob in the Piræus. The whole work becomes a mysticism, and to escape from these idle dreams, as Brucker assures him, of a "fanatical cobweb-spinning fancy," he takes up some sober practical reality in the shape of a novel. Multo pars major est, says St. Jerome, Milesias fabulas revolventium quam Platonis libros. In altero enim ludus et oblectatio est, in altero difficultas et sudor mixtus labori [1].

"The Platonic Republic," says Kant, "is become proverbial as a pretended striking example of imaginary perfection, that can have its seat only in the brain of the idle thinker; and Brucker esteems it ridiculous, that the philosopher should maintain that a prince would never govern well, if he were not participant in the ideas. But we (he adds, most wisely) should do better to follow up this thought further, and (where Plato leaves us without assistance) to bring it, by fresh efforts, to light, than to

[1] Præfat. ad Comment. in Isai. lib. xii.

set it aside as useless, under the very miserable and shameless pretence of impracticability [1]."

A great portion of the ridicule attached to the introduction of the doctrine of ideas into politics arises partly from the metaphysical perversion of that doctrine by Aristotle, and partly from the low, impoverished metaphysics and degraded views of political government introduced among ourselves by the Sophists, Locke and his followers.

Morgenstern [2], one of the most judicious of modern commentators, has boldly pronounced (and we may cordially accept his testimony), that Aristotle did not understand the design of the Republic. That he has misinterpreted it, whether intentionally or not, is obvious to any attentive reader. He, as well as Theophrastus, had carefully made an epitome of it [3]; and incidental references to it may be traced in numberless passages of his own works, where no express mention is made of Plato. But to epitomize, is one thing, and to understand, another. And how with a just conception of its purpose, Aristotle should have pronounced the discussion of the principles of education to be an irrelevant superfluity, in a work whose very object was education, it is hard to understand,—*τὰ τ' ἄλλα τοῖς ἔξωθεν λόγοις πεπλήρωκε τὸν λόγον καὶ περὶ τῆς παιδείας ποίαν τινὰ δεῖ γίνεσθαι τῶν φυλάκων.* That he has also either misunderstood or misinterpreted the doctrine of ideas may be suspected even from the sophistical refutation of it which he offers in the Nicomachean Ethics [4], and is still more clear from his treatment of it in the Metaphysics. It is in fact a great mistake, and one which has caused a serious injury to the study of philosophy, and therefore to other studies and practice, to inter-

[1] Kant, Critik der reinen Vernunft. Franc. Dialect. i. 1, p. 267.

[2] Comment. in Repub. Plat.

[3] Diogen. Laert. lib. v. sec. 22. 43.

[4] Lib. i. 6.

pret Plato by Aristotle. And though Dacier is not a very high authority, he has introduced into some most sensible remarks on Plato, an observation which cannot be too frequently repeated. "Pour une fois, que l'on pourra corriger Platon par Aristote, on corrigera cent fois Aristote par Platon[1]." It is a mistake, because however close the resemblance between the two systems in some points, there are essential differences in the tone of feeling, the mode of viewing things, the fundamental principles assumed, which carry them, as they advance, into a wide divergence, and which would render it impossible for the founder of one school to enter heartily into the system of the other. In philosophy, as in religion, to understand we must believe. We cannot see through principles till we have them in our hand, or rather in our heart —act upon them—experience their results—test them under a variety of circumstances—any more than we can pronounce on the true movement of a watch without carrying it about with us, and applying to it constantly on the hypothesis of its being correct. And a cold, logical, critical spirit, bent on subjective truth, cutting off everything beyond this world as an unknown region, on which it were unsafe to venture —deriving knowledge from without rather than from within—from experience instead of intuition—placing itself in the centre of things as a speculative inquirer, not in a system of persons as a practical discharger of duties—incapable of realizing to itself a spiritual world, and therefore plunging deeply into material and physical inquiries—and, lastly, converting laws, and societies, and morals into arrangements of taste, expediency, and reason, instead of positive institutions imposed on us by the authority of God—such a spirit (and it is the spirit of Aristotle), however nearly

[1] Disc. sur Platon, Œuvres de Plat. traduit. vol. i.

it approached at times to the source from which it had deflected, and qualified its deflection by reminiscences of a better philosophy, could not possibly have entered into the views of Plato. In Aristotle—(let it be said with reverence for so great a name, and without any wish to supersede his writings by those of Plato in the work of general education), but in Aristotle may be traced the seeds of nearly all the falsehoods which sprung up fully to light in the Sophistical schools which have followed him; and therefore he cannot be a fit commentator or explainer of the great antagonist of Sophistry. And therefore students should be warned against looking to any source but Plato himself for a view of his doctrines, especially of his doctrine of ideas. And for the best interpretation of it, let them consider the system of belief and of life, under which they are now acting, and ask, if this also has not its doctrine of ideas, occupying a place as prominent, and as vitally essential to the preservation of the whole, as in the Platonic philosophy itself.

CHAPTER XXIX.

First then, let them draw a clear broad line between the meaning of the words ὄντα, εἶναι, ἐστὶ, as employed by Aristotle and by Plato. In Aristotle it means "*being*," as the highest abstract notion, which we reach by an analysis of our mental conceptions. ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη τις, ἢ θεωρεῖ τὸ ὂν ᾗ ὄν, καὶ τὰ τούτῳ ὑπάρχοντα καθ' αὐτὸ . . . . διὸ καὶ ἡμῖν τοῦ ὄντος ᾗ ὄν, τὰς πρώτας αἰτίας ληπτέον[1]." In Plato it means "*being*," as existing *permanently*, *really*, *absolutely*, as opposed always to τὰ γιγνόμενα — the things created, and therefore destructible, liable to change, shifting, unreal—in one word, it means truth. Hence the metaphysics of Aristotle are a logical analysis of the primary highest modes of subjective thought. Those of Plato are a study of an objective Being, external to man, and of objective laws established by his will both in the spiritual and in the material world. That this is the idea always present to Plato's mind, is obvious from the pointed contrast which, whenever he treats of Being, he draws between it and the "created"—τὰ γιγνόμενα. It is proved also by the very object of his system, which laboured to restore some principles of immutable truth, upon the ruins of that belief, which had been overthrown by the Sensuism and Empiricism of the sophistical school. And thus when Aristotle[2] classes the τὰ ὄντα and ἰδέαι of Plato with the metaphysical abstractions of former theorists, he is first misrepresenting

[1] Metaphy. lib. iv. c. 1, Duval. [2] Metaphy. lib. i. c. 6, 7.

and then refuting him; a process which, it must be confessed, he seems to have pursued not unfrequently in the case of other philosophers besides Plato.

These then are the questions to be answered, before we can be competent judges of the Platonic doctrine of ideas.

1. Are there in nature, in the world of sense, in the moral world, in reason, in religion, any arrangements, rules, principles, facts, fixed and immutable, when contrasted with varying and uncertain phenomena?

2. Are these the work of a Creator, and therefore necessary indications of his will and nature; and, as his works, and not the work of man, are they not objective rather than subjective; something beyond and above the conceptions, which we form of them within our minds?

3. Are they not all to be referred to the nature and attributes of the Deity himself, of which they are copies and *shadows*, and which therefore they can only faintly represent and lead us up to, as to the only real and only perfect.

4. Are they not properly called ἰδέαι, or forms (not *ideas*, let us remember, in the modern sense of the word), inasmuch as they determine the shapes, lineaments, proportions, combinations, into which so much of the world is cast, as came immediately from God, and after which all ought to be modelled which is subjected to the rule of man?

5. Is it not the business of man—the very task laid upon him in this life—whether in matters of sensation, or feeling, or action, or reasoning, to realize these objective truths—to elicit, to arrange, to keep them constantly before him, to take them as the mould into which his thoughts and affections—his whole mind is to run, in order to become again the image of his Maker?

6. What is the process, by which this realization is effected? What is there in the constitution of the mind, which renders it practicable? What external aid is required? Is not the whole operation the proper and only description of a true education, and of a right political organization? And has not Plato described it accurately and practically?

These questions cannot be entered into at length. But if the object of the Republic, as of all the Platonic philosophy, was to promulgate the answer to them, and to fix it before the eyes of men—to prove that truth must be the basis of all goodness, and of all wisdom—that truth can be found only in God; and that the knowledge of God is the one great perfection of the individual as of the state—the bond which holds together all other knowledge—the might which places the reason as lord over man's feelings and affections, and fixes the just subordination of those many members, which make up the constitution of the man, and the body of society—then this object must be kept in view throughout, and thoroughly comprehended, or we must not venture to sit in judgment on Plato.

First, then, consider, is there anything in the constitution of the mind itself, which seems to require the existence of such objective truths, or ἰδέαι, as essential to its perfection, perhaps to its very existence.

Think how every action of man's mind, willing, judging, feeling, seeing, hearing, loving, fearing, hating—how even consciousness—self-consciousness, implies the existence of something objective, out of, beyond, independent of him, who thinks, feels, hates, loves, or looks into himself—how without such a fulcrum he cannot move—without such an image he cannot see—without such an end he cannot advance—how even his own conceptions, the mere arbitrary

creations of his fancy, he takes and projects forward from himself, fixes them apart and independent, before he can dwell on or enjoy them—how all his moral affections are moulded essentially on relations between himself and others, so that take those others away, and they drop off and perish at once. Without a belief in objective realities, the mind cannot exist. It anchors on them, as the shell-fish on the rock—colours itself with them, as water is the mirror of the sky—gazes on them, as the eye of sense, "seeing all things, by itself unseen"—guides itself by them, as the vessel steers by the stars—is moulded by them, as the fibres of the plant are shaped by the matrix of the earth, and by the impulses of light and of air.

But this is not all.

Unity—unity in duration as well as in combination—unity within the mind itself, as well as in the object which it contemplates, is the grand law of the human mind, the end to which it struggles, the only satisfaction of its affections. For this it reasons, forcing all the variety of facts and phenomena under one universal law: for this it acts, placing before its eye the filling up of some chasm, the establishment of some connexion, the perfection of some scheme, which is now defective,—wanting, that is, in order, consistency, harmony, and therefore in unity. For this it requires symmetry and proportion to the eye, rhythm and melody to the ear, sympathy in feeling, grandeur in design, identity of pursuit, uniformity of opinion, command over associations, infinity in all things. Government, love, friendship, marriage, society, laws, property, power, obedience, are all developments of this law. Without unity man's mind is a chaos.

But how is this unity in the mind to be attained, except by the unity, permanence, and immutability of its object? It must rest on an object, must

derive its own character from that object. Shift, unsettle, disturb the object, and the mind is unsettled also. It falls into doubt and perplexity. It loses confidence in itself. It feels at the mercy of a power which it cannot command; before a future which it cannot foresee—surrounded by hidden agencies, as if the ground on which it stood were undermined; without daring to anticipate, or prove, or inquire, or believe, or act on belief, when the next moment may overturn the experience of the last, and it is left without guidance or end like a vessel tost upon the waters, rudderless and without a compass, with no port to make for, and no stars to steer by.

And yet this is the condition into which a man must ultimately sink, who does not hold firmly, under whatever name, a belief in objective facts, and immutable external existences, such as Plato placed before him under the name of ἰδέαι or forms. Once make truth subjective, conceive of it as existing only in the mind, and though at first, as the better class of Sophists did, you may endeavour to make it permanent, by universal consent, by authority, by appealing to the unaltering voice of conscience, to the unanimous testimony of reason, sooner or later this must be lost. It must be lost, because you cannot fix the mind itself. Still the atmosphere, so that not a breath will disturb either the foliage or the water, and the reflection will lie unbroken in a calm and perfect picture. Ruffle the branches with a breeze, but let the water lie undisturbed, and the picture may still be traced, though less distinct. But ruffle the water also, and the picture perishes. And no energy of thought, no uniformity of circumstances, no fixedness of habit or purpose, can so freeze and petrify the mind, that it shall not fluctuate and vary every hour; that even when the objects remain fixed, it shall always give them back unaltered, much less that, when nothing is before it, but the reflection

of its own disturbed movement, it shall preserve any thing like consistency or unity.

And all systems alike have more or less recognized the necessity of combining in the education and government of man these two principles, of objectiveness, and of immutability or unity. The Oriental philosophy endeavoured to absorb the whole man in the very being of God, as a drop of water mingles with the sea, so as to destroy all individuality, and with individuality all the doubt and distraction arising from a variation of objects. The Egyptian hierarchy raised up the authority of a priesthood, prescribing every action of life, ruling over the diet of the sovereign as over the pencil of the painter, and the hand of the musician [1], lest the objective standard of truth should be shaken by innovation in trifles. Other Eastern empires surrounded their political laws with the same magic circle of prescription and identity. Even when all these external fences had been broken down, Greek philosophy endeavoured to take refuge in natural principles, the testimony of the wise, the uniform conduct of legislators, the voice of mankind at large, to guarantee the permanence of its principles. Even sophistry could not exist without them, and transferred infallibility and certainty to the will, fancy, conscience of the individual, just as a modern Dissenter creates an infallible Pope for every doctrine of religion, and almost for every act, within his own reason, and his own heart. Without infallibility or immutability somewhere, man cannot live; and the only question has been, not whether it exists, but where it resides, and how it is to be found.

All likewise agreed in making it apparently objective; for even the Sophists made the will of the individual the voice of Nature, and his reason the

[1] Plato's Laws.

unerring interpreter of absolute external truth, so far as they supposed that truth to exist; but what this Nature was, or what this external truth, they did not profess to ascertain: and thus, with this pretence of objectiveness, their standard was in reality wholly subjective, dependent on the mind of man. And the mind of man thus let loose from external restraint, and sanctioned by a presumed authority in its wildest licences, whether of opinion or of will, soon showed itself in its real nature. And the theory, beautiful at first, became at last open profligacy and folly.

ἐν βιότου προτελείοις
ἄμερον, εὐφιλόπαιδα
φαιδρωπὸν ποτὶ χεῖρα . . .
. . . . . .
χρονισθεὶς δ' ἀπέδειξεν
ἔθος τὸ πρὸς τοκέων· χάριν
τροφεῦσιν ἀμείβων.

Æsch. Agamem. v. 700.

CHAPTER XXX.

But if these τὰ ὄντα — these immutable, external facts and laws, are thus necessary to us, what evidence have we of their existence? Sense presents at first but a chaos of irregular phenomena. Conscience, like a flickering lamp, burns unsteadily, and varies with the breath of circumstances, or with changes in the moral atmosphere in which it lives. Reasoning is but calculation; and where is the mechanism so sure as to guarantee its results from error? And when sense, and conscience, and reason are exhausted, what else remains, by which we can learn truth? Grant even the existence of things externally, can we gain any notion of these except by something within us? Must not all belief in objective existences depend at last upon subjective evidence? We are shut up, as it were, in a prison, and though we may infer and imagine what is passing without the walls, it must be by something which is perceived within them. This is the objection now commonly made to all deference to authority or historical testimony. The believer, it is said, chooses his own authority, and therefore the criterion of truth is ultimately within himself. It is also the objection practically made to Plato's doctrine, that we can obtain no knowledge of the ἰδέαι except by an internal action of the mind,—or by ideas, in the modern sense of the word. And thus his system sinks to a level with that of the Sophists.

To answer these doubts, let us take the analogy, in the first place, of physical science. What is its fundamental principle? It is, that in the apparent chaos of natural phenomena, there are an order, and a plan, however imperceptible to untutored minds,

general laws, established analogies, universal principles of creation—that the strata of the earth are not tossed on each other confusedly, but are arranged in a *form*, an *ἰδέα*—that the organization of animals, however various, is developed upon one type—that their combinations are so fixed, that from a detached bone the whole frame-work of the skeleton may be, and has been prophesied, and the prophecy realized—that one law rolls the planets in their orbits, and throws a pebble to the ground—that reproduction is similarly provided for in the animal and vegetable world—that even the mystical fanaticism, as it has been held, of Pythagoras, the doctrine that all things are created in numbers, is after all the true theory of chemistry, and that "no combination can take place between the elements of matter, except in *certain fixed numerical proportions*[1]." The discovery of these forms, or *ἰδέαι*, these *ὄντα*, or permanent existing facts,—the extrication of them from the mass of confused observations, in which they at first lie buried,—is the great business of what men now call science—science, as if knowledge and certainty were exclusively confined to matter; and as if mind had neither *ἰδέαι* nor *ὄντα*, or such only as are placed beyond the reach of man, to mention which is mere mysticism.

Farther, the knowledge of these forms and universal existences is held necessary not only to our animal life, for which we cannot provide without being able to prophesy the future from the experience of the past by reference to general laws,—but even to our intellectual perfection. The certainty of these laws gives, it is thought, certainty and stability to our knowledge, and the certainty of our knowledge confers dignity and elevation on the mind.

[1] See an interesting View of the Atomic Theory by Dr. Daubeney, the distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Botany in the University of Oxford. 1831, p. 112.

Thus far no physical philosophers can find fault with the philosophy of Plato. Neither perhaps will they complain that he wished to make philosophers kings, or kings philosophers, in order that the patronage and encouragement of government might be employed to promote and keep alive science, or the knowledge of the ὄντα and the ἰδέαι.

In the process also by which those physical philosophers evolve their ἰδέαι, they differ little from Plato. They would be surprised, perhaps indignant, at being charged with adopting the principle of the Platonic *Dialectics*. And yet Bacon only did for physical science what Plato, by Bacon's own confession, attempted for moral science; but failed in establishing so wide a school, simply because ordinary men are more prone to matter than they are to mind. Each would compel men to abandon subjective fancies for objective facts, and to bend their theories to an external law. As the schoolmen of Bacon's day had raised a system of physics upon speculative analogies, and metaphysical abstractions—so the Sophists of Plato's day had founded a scheme of morals, on the quicksand of human reason and individual conscience, on belief, sensation, calculations of expediency, unregulated instincts, forgetting the only true criterion of right and wrong, of good and evil—the positive institutions, and absolute, unconditional attributes of the Creator of the world. Plato was the great reformer of ancient ethics, as Bacon was the reformer of modern physics. And both [1] followed the

[1] "At inductio, quæ ad inventionem et demonstrationem scientiarum et artium erit utilis, naturam separare debet per rejectiones et exclusiones debitas; ac deinde post negativas tot, quot sufficiunt, super affirmativas concludere; quod adhuc factum non est, nec tentatum certe, nisi tantummodo a Platone, qui ad excutiendas definitiones et ideas hâc certe formâ inductionis aliquâtenus utitur."—Nov. Organ. i. 105.

only reasoning process compatible with their views of truth—the process of legitimate induction, founded on analysis and experiment. "You are so formed," Plato would say to a young man, "that you can scarcely help pronouncing in some way on the good and evil, virtuousness or viciousness of every action presented to you, as you cannot help affirming or denying any fact which you see or hear of. There is a voice within you which pronounces judgment the moment the case is brought before you. It is your conscience in morals, it is your intellect in logic. It pronounces by referring to a book of precedents within you—to that collection, in one case of moral principles, which, right or wrong, every man must carry within him, and by which he regulates his actions; in the other, of past experiences and general axioms of belief, with which alike he must be furnished, whether they are sound or unsound. What accords with them seems right and true; what differs from them seems wrong and false. But for this decision to be correct two things are necessary: first, your standard itself must be right; secondly, the case, which you bring under it, must be really such as it appears to you. Fail in either point, and you fall into error. You assert as an axiom of geology, that at all periods of the world organized bodies were created under similar laws as at present. You find fossils so situated that under such a system it must have taken cycles of years to deposit them. Here, it is said, is a fact, and the words of Scripture must be bent to meet it. Now both axiom and fact may be false, or the axiom may be true and the fact false, or the axiom false, and the fact true—and yet in either case the conclusion drops to the ground. Prove, therefore, Plato would say, not only your axiom but your fact by a minute analysis of its parts and circumstances, by strict defini-

tions of words, by accurate enumeration of the ideas which you employ. Granting the hypothesis, not only that the course of nature always has been identical, but that the fossils before you must have taken so many ages to form—ascertain also that you are not deceived in the fact before you, by accidental dislocation of strata, by mistakes of the senses, by careless observations. Look to your experiments, he would say to the chemist, see that you have constructed them with no extraneous element in them, no imperceptible deviation from your own calculation. But even then he would add, look also to your first principles. All the phenomena of light may seem reducible under the corpuscular theory, but after all the corpuscular theory may be false. All the symbols of a cypher may by some strange accident be interpreted consistently by a key, but that key may not be the true one. You may judge rightly, that such an act is murder, such an act stealing, such an act self-command, or self-indulgence; but how do you know that the law by which you decide on its merit is itself right—that murder is sinful, stealing sinful, self-command a virtue, or self-indulgence a vice? Conform, he would say, both to the geologist and moralist, your own conception of the individual fact to its real external nature, the τὸ ὂν, which is independent of any opinion or fancy—δόξα, φαντασία—of your own. And go farther, he would say to the moralist, as the geologist says to himself, and conform your conceptions of the laws and axioms of morals, which you bear about within you, to some external standard, an ἰδέα, or τὸ ὂν, of moral truth. See that the laws by which you decide are not forged, have not been interpolated, that you understand them, do not misinterpret, do not see but a part of them, have not invented them yourself.

CHAPTER XXXI.

And here we arrive at the fundamental question of moral science—the question which the present day is bound to answer, and to place the answer boldly, and firmly, and constantly, before the eyes of a wilful generation, as the only human mode of rescuing it from the crimes and follies which are thickening round us. What is the true criterion of right and wrong, good and evil? is it what we each think, feel, like, dislike, praise or blame? or is it something out of us, immutable, eternal, the only truth?

Let us remember that all philosophical theories have their root in a disposition of the heart. And to this we must look for the cause of the two answers, which have been given to the question. Give a man humility and self-distrust; let him see and feel the blindness and corruption of human nature; inspire him with that craving of noble minds for communion with superior beings, for dependence on a higher power, for extrication from the consciousness of self; and he will not bear to think that he is left to the light within him, to walk on still in darkness, and alone upon the earth, with no voice to guide him but the echo of his own footsteps. Give him on the other hand, conceit and vanity, shallowness of learning, thoughtlessness, or thoughtfulness divested of moral associations and affections, involve him in speculation, and speculation only, shut him up within the shell of his own selfish existence, give him low and contemptuous opinions of those around him, and thus throw a slur on man, and, through man, on the whole spiritual world beyond him (for you cannot defile the glass

without obscuring the landscape seen through it), and he will be quite content to hear that he is an absolute independent judge, that he needs no assistance, and may be left to himself—that all truth is subjective: and the form which his conclusion takes will vary with the deterioration of his character, and the circumstances in which he is placed. It will appear in many successive phases, gradually sinking and sinking till it reaches avowed vice. And the history of this process is the history of all philosophy, morals, religion, and society, since the creation of man, as Plato himself has sketched it out in the eighth and ninth books.

What however is the process by which he, who cannot be satisfied with a merely subjective standard, will reach one that is objective? It will be first by the instinctive longing for it. To find a thing we must wish to find it, to wish to find a law over our will, an immutable, eternal law, perfect, and holy, and undefiled, a man must have something in his heart of more than earthly origin, a nature implanted in him by a superior Being—*χρυσίον καὶ ἀργύριον θεῖον παρὰ θεῶν αἰεὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἔχουσι*[1]. As no such law of morals can exist except in a moral being, his heart also must be alive to moral affections—affections of faith, obedience, gratitude, love—every feeling which flows from the relation not of a person to a thing, but of persons (*ἀρχαὶ πράξεως*) to persons. He must have, in the striking words of Plotinus[2], which, if Plotinus had lived before Christianity, might have been taken as prophetic, *τὴν αὐτοῦ κάλλους πρότερον ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὄρεξιν, καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν, καὶ συγγένειαν*[3], *καὶ οἰκειότητος ἄλογον σύνεσιν*. With

[1] Repub. lib. iv. p. 124.

[2] Ennead III. lib. v. Ennead I. lib. iii.

[3] *Συγγενὲς* is the word by which Plato also expresses the natural affinity of minds, by which they draw and cling together; and the word will not be lost on the Christian reader.

this he will catch at every sound or sight, which seems to imply the existence of that, which he desires to believe. He will catch at it, as a heathen wearied and exhausted with the battle in his own heart, and with the darkness, and crimes, and miseries around him, must have caught at the voice of the Gospel—as Justin listened to the old man upon the sea-shore, when the fire was kindled in his heart—*ἐμοῦ δὲ παραχρῆμα πῦρ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἀνήφθη*, and he became a Christian[1].

As the first symbol and representative of a law external to himself, law personified in a moral person like to but above himself, he will place himself under the government of man[2]. *He will place himself*, I said, thinking of an unhappy Athenian, without a home, in which he might take refuge, without the sanctity of domestic ties, made his own civil ruler, abandoned by religious instructors, and compelled to

[1] Dialog. cum Tryph. 107.

[2] It is interesting to compare the conversions of Justin, who died a martyr, and of Tatian, who fell into heresy. They are typical of the two classes of Christians—one, who believe by the heart and prove by the head; the other, who believe and prove by the head only. Justin's interview with the old man, and the effect which it had on him, are well known: first, "the fire was kindled," and Justin's conversion was completed by dwelling on his words—*διαλογιζόμενος πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ*. Tatian was converted by the Bible, and the Bible only, that is, by his own notions of its credibility and consistency with his reason. The Greek is very striking—*κατ' ἐμαυτὸν γενόμενος ἐζήτουν, ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τ' ἀληθὲς ἐξευρεῖν δύναμαι· περινοοῦντι δέ μοι τὰ σπουδαῖα, συνέβη γραφαῖς τισὶν ἐντυχεῖν βαρβαρικαῖς . . . . . καί μοι πεισθῆναι ταύταις συνέβη διά τε τῶν λέξεων τὸ ἄτυφον . . . . .* and he proceeds to enumerate the internal evidences of the Bible . . . . . *τούτων οὖν τὴν κατάληψιν μεμνημένος, καὶ πεποιημένος* . . . . . I desire to put off my sins."—Tatian, contr. Græcos, § 29, p. 167. Fol. Even while he adhered to the truth he seems to have been retained in it by the presence of his teacher Justin. "Post mortem præceptoris," says Cave, "tanquam cæcus duce destitutus in præcipitia se dedit."—Cave's Hist. Literar. vol. i. art. Tatian.

choose his own teacher for himself, to be αἱρετικὸς, a heretic, and thus to fall back upon himself as a fit judge and criterion of truth. But on us, thank God! as yet there has no such calamity fallen. Our homes are still standing, much as they have been shaken; and children are still born into subjection to their parents; and parents may still be made fit persons to exercise that power, for which they were ordained by nature. And we have still not only laws and legislators, the creatures of our own will, in obeying whom we only obey ourselves, but a sovereign whom *we do not create*—a person placed over us all, *without any reference to our choice*—an independent, supreme will embodied in a person, to whom, and not to laws, as Bacon[1], speaking with the voice of our ancient institutions, declares again and again, we do our homage, and swear allegiance, and are made subject from our birth, *whether we will or not.* And the Church, maimed and mutilated as it is, has still its parochial system, with one person at least planted by external authority in the centre of each knot of population, to embody an external law of religious faith and practice. Replace back, as far as may be, into the bosom of their families the children, whom we take from them by our forced system of national education; preserve the hereditary principle in rank and rule; and extend the presence of the Church by multiplying its ministers; and you thus maintain over the mind a body of positive institutions, incorporated in moral persons, and insure the first condition necessary in the establishment of an objective standard of truth for the weaker and more ignorant of men—those men whom God made to be governed by men, not to be dependent on them-

[1] Case of the Post Nati in Scotland, Works, vol. ii. 4to. p. 518, &c.

selves—whom he creates, nurtures, teaches, rules, saves, blesses, punishes, acts on in every character, not by himself directly, but mediately through the agency of man, and to release whom from human authority is not emancipation but destruction.

And this is enough for the most: let the standard of truth be correct, and those who obey it will enjoy its benefit, whether lodged in themselves or in others —enjoy it as much as they are capable, since their very position of inferiority implies that they are only able to be wise through the wisdom of others—*σοφὸν ἐκείνῳ τῷ σμικρῷ μέρει τῷ ὃ ἤρχετ' ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ταῦτα παρήγγελλεν*[1]. Place it over them from their infancy—let habit, prejudice and association bind them to it—receive them, as Augustin expresses it, "into the citadel of faith," before they know the dangers from which they have been rescued, that they may there be defended and preserved without having been previously corrupted by vacillation and doubt[2].

These are the principles to be remembered, when we would interpret that part of Plato's polity which fixed the relation between the *φύλακες*, or governing body, and the rest of the nation. How the *φύλακες* themselves are to come into possession of the truth, and insure it from corruption, is a subsequent question. But supposing them to have received this deposit, they are to hold it as the palladium of the State, to fence it round from the slightest infringement, to keep it fixed stedfastly before the eyes of the people, so far as they are able to bear it, to embody it in all their institutions, to make it the rule

[1] Repub. lib. iv. p. 158.

[2] See how Plato dreads the miserable effect of this tampering with early belief—Repub. lib. vii. p. 280; Phædo, vol. i. p. 154; and contrast it with the fatal but characteristic maxim of Aristotle, of seeking truth through the medium of doubts, *ἀπορίαι*.

and the end of education, the model on which they work in fashioning all, whom they can reach, to become the image of God—*ὁμοιώματα τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Hence the inflexible maintenance of prescription, the minute jealousy of innovation even in a note of music [1], the stern resolution to bring the whole man under subjection to *positive law*, the boldness with which he traces the first deflection in society to a deviation from *positive law* [2], and closes the consummation of its ruin, not merely in crime and folly, but in *lawlessness*, the release from restrictions—*ἀνομία*.

Let us not insult Plato by degrading the office of his *φύλακες* into such views of government as Locke and others have accustomed even Englishmen to tolerate, as if the ruler of a state was a constable, an excise officer, or a purveyor of provisions, and nothing more [3]. If any thing could enable us to appreciate the prophetic grandeur of Plato's views, it would be the sight of the Church realizing his theory of a government, and fulfilling his own ardent aspirations to see his pictured State in life and motion —*θεάσασθαι κινούμενα αὐτά* [4].

[1] Lib. iv. p. 132. [2] Lib. viii.

[3] See Locke's wretched system, passim, in his Essay on Civil Government. It is gratifying to find that it has been recently exposed at Cambridge by Professor Whewell, an unprejudiced witness, and whose voice must have great weight in recalling us from the blind idolatry with which a shallow age very naturally bowed down to a shallow philosophy.

[4] Timæus, vol. vii. p. 4.

CHAPTER XXXII.

And there are coincidences not less striking in the mode in which he proposed to arrange his governing body, so as to command the whole nation, to keep garrison as it were in every part, to supply every individual with an embodied personified law close to him, to whom he might look not servilely for the government of his actions—*ἐλθόντες δὲ θεασάσθων τῆς πόλεως, ὅπου κάλλιστον στρατοπεδεύσασθαι, ὅθεν τούς τε ἔνδον μάλιστ' ἂν κατέχοιεν, εἴ τις μὴ ἐθέλει τοῖς νόμοις πείθεσθαι, τούς τε ἔξωθεν ἀπαμύνοιεν* [1].

This is the great problem in the organization of the Church; and can only be solved by a proper adjustment of the principle of incorporation, and of that of individual influence. It must be a thoughtless reader who does not pause at the end of the third book, when he reads of the simple abodes, the austere system of life, the cells, such as become soldiers, *οἰκήσεις στρατιωτικὰς* [2], the *συσσίτια*, or common meals, the prohibition of closed doors, and separate receptacles for provisions, the revenue raised by an annual tax, and just sufficient—*ταξαμένους παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν δέχεσθαι μισθὸν τῆς φυλακῆς τοσοῦτον, ὅσον μήτε περιεῖναι αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν μήτε ἐνδεῖν* [3], and the rigid exclusion of silver and gold—who reads this, and does not turn to the ancient institutions of the church, its consolidated bodies of clergy, its cathedrals, its monasteries, the rules of its religious orders, in more than one instance almost word

[1] Repub. lib. iii. p. 122. [2] P. 122. [3] P. 124.

for word the same with Plato: in one word, to that principle of incorporation, which, whether carried to excess or not, is in itself essential to the preservation and inculcation of truth—which our Lord himself established—which the early Church scrupulously retained—which Romanism sadly abused—which we have almost lost—and which if we do not recover by invigorating the debilitated remnants still left in our colleges and cathedrals, and throwing our clergy once more not into monastic but into collegiate forms, the Church in this country will find it hard indeed to retain her authority and position.

Of any thing analogous to our present parochial system—a system which itself requires to be modelled, far more than it is at present, on a plan of incorporation—there are fewer traces in Plato, and on those which occur something has been said previously. With us unhappily it is at present little more than the development, if the word may be used, of individualism. Each parish priest, the φύλαξ both of his flock (it is the language of Plato) and of Divine truth, and the guardian of each against both enemies without, and the disobedient within the Church, stands before them single and alone, unsupported by any incorporation to cover his own defects, to check his own errors, to sanction his discipline, or to confirm his teaching. And the consequences we are feeling all around us. And yet individuals must be employed as the extreme prehensors of that hand, with which the Church should grasp the whole body of the people —as the meshes of that net with which, in the words of our Lord, it is to "catch men." But perhaps both Plato and the Church—the Church I mean, of later times, plundered and beaten down by sacrilege, and enervated by political conflicts, and compelled by them to break up the massive, impregnable squares into which she had thrown her

forces, and to scatter them over the face of the country—perhaps both Plato and the Church committed the same error. Neither of them seem to have remembered that these prehensors, these fingers of society in the persons of individual men, are provided for us already by God in the persons of parents —that neither the State nor the Church is formed to act immediately upon individuals, but upon families —that the family, not the individual, is the primary element of society—and that when any power forcibly interferes with the natural institutions of domestic life, the result must be disastrous. This was one of the great sins of monasticism. Instead of merely opening refuges in which scattered undomesticated individuals—the floating atoms of society—might be received and formed into artificial families upon the model of those of nature (and such a plan can scarcely be overvalued), it too often encouraged men forcibly to break from the relations of birth and blood; and, the moment the vow of perpetual celibacy was imposed, it as forcibly obstructed the formation of others. This also has been the mistake of the English Church. It has thought more of individuals than of families. It has created and dispersed abroad a power inadequate even to cope with children, certainly not adequate to controul parents. And too often, especially of late, it has broken up the family relationship, by transplanting the children into large schools, and superseding the parental authority. It is the mistake rather of her poverty than of her will; but unless speedily and decidedly corrected, it will have led to serious mischief. And this also is the great blot in the Republic—a blot which it is impossible to cover. True it is that Plato throws out his theory of marriage as a mere theory—as a wild impracticable mode of solving a great problem to the fancy, not as either possible or expedient to be re-

alized. True that he warns the reader again and again not to charge him with the design of realizing it. True that in the circumstances of his days, in the hopeless, irredeemable corruption of family life at Athens, he could scarcely trace the form of that high instrument in the hands of God, by which man is to be first reared into life, both in his body and his mind. True also that he would not destroy the instincts and affections of nature, but only multiply and transfer them, so that the whole state should be one family "of fathers, children, and brothers[1]:" as Christianity has realized the wish literally in all its parts, but by a spiritual marriage, and a spiritual regeneration[2]. And true that his end was noble—to bind together the whole body in one, to extinguish all selfish affections, to secure for the child the highest and most watchful superintendence, to bring all the members of the polity immediately under the eye of the ruler, perhaps also even to purify and chasten (though the hope were vain), assuredly not to give a licence to man's worst and lowest passions. But granting all this, and more, Plato forgot the family—he set aside the institution of nature, though only in idea, and has ever since paid the penalty of being scoffed at and contemned by men who knew little of his system but this one blot—men incapable of fathoming the mystery of his wisdom and purity—to whom but one thing seemed intelligible, a theory which bordered upon vice.

[1] Lib. v. p. 183.

[2] Perhaps the parallel cannot be stated better than in the words of St. Ambrose. "Augetur benevolentia cœtu Ecclesiæ, fidei consortio, initiandi societate, percipiendæ gratiæ necessitudine, mysteriorum communione. Hæc enim etiam appellationes necessitudinum, reverentiam filiorum, auctoritatem et pietatem patrum, germanitatem fratrum sibi vindicant. Multum igitur ad cumulandam spectat benevolentiam necessitudo gratiæ."—Ambrosius, De Officiis, lib. i. c. 33.

And when the reader rests on this spot, he should also recal the days of heathenism, in which Plato wrote—before God's voice had been again heard commanding men to reverence and preserve his positive institutions, promising his blessing on obedience, promising that if we trusted ourselves to those whom He placed over us, whether in nature, in society, or in the Church, evil and ignorant as they might be in themselves, He would overrule their hearts to good—before woman had been raised from a slave to be the companion and help meet for man, not by a forced discipline like Plato's, but by communicating to her the highest privileges of human nature, and by chastening the passions of men—before, lastly, the light of Christianity had been thrown on that prophetic arrangement of nature, on which the marriage union is formed, and had shown it to be the type and representative of that highest power upon earth, under which man is really to be nurtured—imaging the Church in the family, and the family in the Church, and leading up the eye, through all the branches of domestic life, to the grand forms, the ἰδέαι of God, which are their root and trunk.

When, in fact, we examine the real position of woman in Athenian society, as exhibited in the Greek comedies, and other notices of the day, there is reason to be astonished at the grandeur and elevation even of this the most objectionable part of Plato's writings—astonished that with such a ruin before him he should have been able to conceive a plan for restoring it, though the plan itself was an error.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

But we must not dwell more on this point. There follows next the grave question, what security can we have, if we trust to these arrangements of nature, that man will not abuse his power? and granting him hypothetically at present to be the channel for conveying to his fellow man the objective laws and forms of truth, that he will not misrepresent or lose them, as philosophers have done, as schools have done, as hierarchies have done, as eastern priesthoods, and modern Rome, and modern Dissenters have done, and still more as the heart and reason of every individual man is prone to do.

This security is to be found in the Church chiefly in the principle of Catholicity, or the establishment of many distinct Churches, so connected together, not by union under one visible government, but by a close communion of independent bodies, as mutually to check and support each other. In the absence of this, the provisions made by Plato for guarding his transmission of truth are singularly interesting. To a modern they will appear singularly futile. He will look in vain for any of those ingenious contrivances, which later politicians have devised to prevent the abuse of power. Plato did not think that to have the privilege of possessing and promulgating religious truth was a necessary ingredient of a tyranny. He therefore never thought of securing the liberty of the subject by shaking off the yoke of a Church. Neither did he understand the mysterious problem into which Milton, Locke, and Rousseau,

and the Social Contract writers, have cast their ideal societies: according to which men, in order to secure their freedom, place themselves wholly in the power of their governors, reserving to themselves the power of governing their governors as they choose. Neither does he seem to have the slightest notion of a balance of independent civil powers—of any thing like a civil constitution, at least a constitution intended to move, of which the several parts should so check and counteract each other, as to produce, when fully in order, a general stand still. Neither did he think it expedient (he who placed unity and consistency high in the scale of virtues), that the supreme power should be prevented from abuse by shifting it every day from hand to hand, so that no one should have the time to do either mischief or good. Neither does he seem to care whether it is lodged in the hands of one or of many [1]. Strange to say, he seems to have thought that monarchies, and oligarchies, and the rule of the many, were very illogical classifications of government—for that all bodies, however numerous, must act through a majority, and all majorities must depend on one voice; and that thus no other form than a monarchy is possible among men, however we attempt to hide the person of the monarch, and to conceal his own power from him by burying it under an infinity of unseen contingencies. Still more strangely he thinks it needless to prove the right of his government to govern, by any appeal to expediency, as if government were only a means to an end, and not in itself a natural function and good, by which superiors and inferiors are held together, and which constitutes the natural relation between them. He makes the end of the society neither the good of the governor

[1] Lib. vi. p. 232.

nor of the governed, so as to sink one in the other, but the good of the whole—*οὐ μὴν πρὸς τοῦτο βλέποντες τὴν πόλιν οἰκίζομεν, ὅπως ἔν τι ἡμῖν ἔθνος ἔσται διαφερόντως εὔδαιμον, ἀλλ' ὅπως ὁτιμάλιστα ὅλη ἡ πόλις*[1]. And lastly the famous expedient of modern days has wholly escaped him—the expedient by which one man is made responsible for the government of the nation, and another man or body of men retains the absolute command over the means by which it is to be governed, the public purse.

In all these points Plato, it is sad to say, was far behind the enlightenment of modern systems.

He began with acquiescing in the fact against which we so vainly struggle, that somewhere or another in every society, there must be an ultimate supreme power, wielded by the will of man, controlled only by moral laws, responsible only to God, or, in the words of our own English law, "quæ Deum ultorem expectet." He did not think, as men now think, that the way to escape from one power of this kind is by creating another, or transferring it from the hand of the king to the hand of a demagogue. He looked to a moral law as the only check within his reach, and to give it efficacy and stringency he directed all his efforts. His only approach to any scheme of a balance or division of power is found in the distribution of the governors into two bodies, the first and highest (*πρεσβύτεροι*) representing the pure intellectual portion of the community (intellectual, remember, in Plato's sense of the word, as possessing the knowledge of all truths, *τὰ ὄντα*, physical, moral, logical, and religious); the other (*νεώτεροι*[2]) embodying the physical power, placed under the controul of the *πρεσβύτεροι*, or, as Coleridge would call it, under the clergy of the State,

[1] Lib. iv. p. 126. [2] Lib. iii. p. 117.

aiding them in enforcing the same truths on the people at large, regulated by the same laws, or, to use a modern phrase, allied with the Church on the only principles on which such an alliance can be maintained—the principle that the Church shall be removed from the distractions and temptations of physical rule, and that the physical rule shall be regulated by her moral maxims and independent testimony to truth. Perhaps there is nothing in the whole system of the Republic more remarkable than this division. For the times of Plato it was a discovery. Far back in "barbaric times and regions," it had been imperfectly realized and abused in the bicipital governments of Persia, Egypt, Gaul, and India—in almost every nation where the light of primeval revelation had not been wholly lost, and where hierarchies were associated with kings in the rule of nations. But in Greece to revive a Church—to disconnect the civil and spiritual rule, and yet bind them together in one—above all, to frame a system upon reason which yet did not terminate in absolute unity, but in unity combined with plurality—this was an effort of the human mind, which, more than any other, places Plato in advance of his age, and nearer to the great period, when Christianity came down upon earth, to create that body in each nation, which should occupy the position of the πρεσβύτεροι of Plato—which should hold the νεώτεροι, or the power of the State under a similar spiritual influence, and bring them into membership with the Church, but not trespass on their secular power. This division, and balance, and union of the two powers, spiritual and temporal, is perhaps the true foundation of all political society. The disarrangement of them is made by Plato [1] the key to all history, and the beginning of the downfall

[1] Lib. viii.

of states. His great object was to restore it: and his theory was no vision of fancy, but the result of a practical analysis of human nature. It was a copy from the model of a polity framed by God himself in the heart of man, in which not reason alone rules, but reason assisted by a spirit of elevation and power, of conscious command of energy and ambition, the θυμὸς in alliance—σύμμαχος—with the νοῦς.

Having thus excluded his ecclesiastical body, (ἱερεῖς, as he expressly calls them in the epitome which he gives of the Republic in the Timæus [1]), from the temptation to abuse its knowledge and power, and having raised up an ally which might also prove at times a necessary check upon its movement—a check, remember, *not without its pale, but within it; in temporals above its rule, but beneath it in spirituals*,—Plato then addressed himself to the great task of enforcing the right relation between the government and the governed. The φύλακες were to be the "shepherds of the flock," "guardians of the state," "watch dogs," "teachers," "kings," as distinguished from tyrants—men whose heart was set upon the welfare of their subjects, and whose whole efforts were to be directed to their real good, to the increase of their virtue, their wisdom, and their holiness; in one word, to their religious education.

This is the first condition required in the selection of the upper class—ἐκλεκτέον ἄρ' ἐκ τῶν ἄλλων φυλάκων τοιούτους ἄνδρας, οἳ ἂν σκοποῦσιν ἡμῖν μάλιστα φαίνονται παρὰ πάντα τὸν βίον, ὃ μὲν ἂν τῇ πόλει ἡγήσωνται ξυμφέρειν, πάσῃ προθυμίᾳ ποιεῖν· ὃ δ' ἂν μὴ, μηδενὶ τρόπῳ πρᾶξαι ἂν ἐθέλειν [2]. This is to be the fundamental doctrine of practice—εἰ φυλακικοί εἰσι τούτου τοῦ δόγματος [3]. Those only are to be enrolled in Plato's clergy who have "iden-

[1] Vol. vii. p. 11. [2] Lib. iii. p. 118. [3] Ibid.

tified their own interest with that of the society"—who have stood afflictions, heavy afflictions, in its support—" who have borne pain," " have resisted pleasure," have been " tried even more than gold in the fire" (they are Plato's own words), and have in all ruled well themselves, shown themselves " good guardians of others," adhered to the teaching they have received, been in all things well ordered and well proportioned—*εὔρυθμοι καὶ εὐάρμοστοι* [1]. And for the highest testimony which can be given to Plato's soundness and discrimination in selecting these conditions, we need only refer to the almost parallel injunctions of St. Paul, especially in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and to the rules of the early Church, respecting the admission to holy orders.

[1] Lib. iii. p. 120.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THERE is something even more striking in what follows. How, asks Plato, shall we concentrate the affections of the rulers on the State which they have to rule, and give them a hearty zeal in its welfare? Their minds are to be set above—delighting in the contemplation of truth, fond of retirement, hating the crowd and bustle, the πολυπραγμοσύνη of political life. And this retirement is not only their pleasure but their duty; for how without contemplation will they be able to preserve and act upon those eternal laws of truth, laws of morals as well as laws of intellect, on which the whole state is to depend? How shall we make them return from that bright world of intelligence, in which they are habitually to dwell, "to the gaol and dungeon of the earth[1]?" It is one of the problems which meet us so frequently in studying the nature of man, where two distinct laws of duty run up into a seeming contradiction, and cannot be reconciled—reconciled, it should be added, without the facts of Christianity. "We will invent for them," says Plato, "a fable[2]. We will endeavour to delude them into a belief (at least nothing but a delusion will reconcile them to the work imposed on them), that their whole life—all that they did and suffered, before they were admitted into our society (let us call it our Church) —was a dream;—that a hand unseen was then forming and fashioning them secretly in the depths of the earth, ἦσαν δὲ τότε τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ὑπὸ γῆς ἐντὸς

[1] Lib. vii. 253. [2] Lib. iii. 121.

πλαττόμενοι καὶ τρεφόμενοι—themselves, their arms, and all which they possess; and when they were fully formed, the earth, which is their mother, brought them forth, ἡ γῆ αὐτοὺς μήτηρ οὖσα ἀνῆκε—and now for her as for a mother and a nurse, ὡς περὶ μητρὸς καὶ τροφοῦ, they must counsel and fight, if any one attack her; and for their fellow-citizens they must think and labour, as for men who are their brothers, and are sprung from the same mother earth —καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν, ὡς ἀδελφῶν ὄντων καὶ γηγενῶν διανοεῖσθαι[1]." Two circumstances are wanting to make this singular dream almost prophetic of the fact which has been realized in the Church, and of the feelings with which her members should regard their duty to her. But they were circumstances, which Plato could not even imagine:—one was the hope of reward to those "who have laboured more abundantly;" the other, that mystery, which makes it possible for man to look up to heaven and at the same time down upon earth, and to see in both the same object of his most elevated thoughts and affections—that mystery which makes him submit patiently to the voice of Him who formed the State, and enter readily into its service, when he is told in the words of Plato[2], that the object of the legislator is not the good of any one member of the body, of the hand or the foot, the eye or the ear[3], but of the body as a whole; that he has "bound and compacted them together to benefit each other by benefiting the whole;" that he formed such men in his state not to do their own will, and "turn which way they choose," but that he might use them for a purpose of his own, to bind the whole communion into one: ἐπελάθου, ἦν δ' ἐγὼ,

[1] Lib. iii. 121. [2] Lib. vii. 253.
[3] Compare 1 Corinth. xii.

πάλιν, ὦ φίλε, ὅτι νομοθέτῃ οὐ τούτου μέλει ὅπως ἔν τι γένος ἐν πόλει διαφερόντως εὖ πράξει· ἀλλ' ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ πόλει τοῦτο μηχανᾶται ἐγγενέσθαι, ξυναρμόττων τοὺς πολίτας, πειθοῖ τε καὶ ἀνάγκῃ ποιῶν μεταδιδόναι ἀλλήλοις τῆς ὠφελείας ἣν ἂν ἕκαστοι τὸ κοινὸν δυνατοὶ ὦσιν ὠφελεῖν· καὶ αὐτὸς ἐμποιῶν τοιούτους ἄνδρας ἐν τῇ πόλει, οὐχ ἵνα ἀφίῃ τρέπεσθαι ὅπῃ ἕκαστος βούληται, ἀλλ' ἵνα καταχρῆται αὐτὸς αὐτῷ, ἐπὶ τὸν ξύνδεσμον τῆς πόλεως [1]. To these commands of duty, which could not exist where men are formed by themselves, αὐτόματοι ἐμφύονται—in states where, if they become good, it is by accident, not by the immediate act and blessing of the parent state—Plato trusts mainly for the self-devotion of his governors to the welfare of the governed. Gratitude is to produce forgetfulness of self, and labour in the service of their country and its lawgiver. "We begot you," says the lawgiver to the rulers. "ἐγεννήσαμεν, to be both to yourselves and to the rest of the city as rulers and kings, educated better and more perfectly than others, more able both to govern and to obey; and therefore in turn you must descend into the dwelling-place of the others, and accustom yourself to that spectacle of darkness."

Having thus provided, as far as his scanty means would allow, for the due interest of the ruler in the good of the subject, Plato would next proceed to the right mode of directing it—that is, to the principles of education. But this is a subject too wide, and too interesting at the present moment, to be thrown into a parenthesis.

That the Platonic education was addressed neither to the body nor to the mind exclusively—that it acted on the whole man—that it proposed to conform

[1] Lib. vii. 263.

men's wills to those objective laws of action, which are the measure of virtue, and their reason to those objective forms of belief, which are real, absolute, and existing truths—τὰ ὄντα—τὰς ἰδέας—it is unnecessary to say: but the process by which this last work was to be conducted, or the dialectical art of Plato, which he has touched on at the end of the sixth and in the seventh book, and has exemplified in all his writings, must be left for another occasion. In the present bustle and stir of education it cannot be studied too often; and the few remarks, which remain at present must be confined to the question, how the governors, or φύλακες, themselves were originally to be put in possession of those objective truths, which they were to preserve and transmit from one generation to another, as the very talisman of the state.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Let us ask, first, how the polity, to which we belong as Christians—how the Church came into possession of her ὄντα or objective truths—her forms, ἰδέας, which every day she proclaims publicly in her assemblies, holds them up in the face of the world, puts them into the mouths of children, builds on them her whole system, guards them as the apple of her eye—forms, descriptions, ἰδέας, first of the nature and attributes of God, not invented by man, not worked out by reason, not dependent on opinion or belief, but absolute immutable existences, which would stand for ever and ever, though the race of men was swept from the face of the globe, and which it is the highest privilege of man's intellect to realize and embrace—*her creeds?* Forms again, ἰδέας, of morality; moulds into which man's actions are to be cast, standards of right and wrong laid up for ever before God in the sanctuary of his own eternal Being, not mutable by man's institution, not calculations of expediency, not air-bubbles of feeling, not even the voice of conscience in any sense in which the word is used, save that of an external monitor, thwarting, opposing, and chastising us with the voice of God himself—but laws of One who is above us and beyond us—*the forms of the ten commandments*[1]*?* Once more, where did the Church obtain

[1] A good exemplification of Plato's Idealist King is to be found in our own Anglo-Saxon times. See especially the Laws of Alfred, which begin with the Ten Commandments,

her third scheme of *ἰδέας* for man—*ἰδέας* for his feelings—patterns after which to shape his affections, and regulate his desires, adjusting them each to a rule of perfection, far, alas! how far from his own heart, and yet the final object on which his heart must be brought to rest—*the Lord's Prayer*[1]? These are the *ἰδέας* of the Church—the very objects which Plato longed to reach—of which he asserted the existence, though he could not discover them, as Columbus prophesied of a world, which his eye had never seen—to know and to realize which he made the first wisdom of man, *μέγιστον μάθημα*—for which he would choose his rulers, and on which he would found his state. And how did the Church acquire them? And the answer is, to a simple Christian, that we received them from our fathers, our fathers from an age before them, that age from the Catholic Church, that Church from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God; that each of these links in the great chain of tradition conducted the light of truth from one hand to the other, as Plato would have conducted it in his own state, each generation rearing up successors to receive it, and then going to their rest: *ἄλλους ἀεὶ παιδεύσαντας τοιούτους ἀντικαταλιπόντας τῆς πόλεως φύλακας εἰς μακάρων νήσους ἀπιόντας οἰκεῖν*[2]. And to minds of simple faith, who hang without reserve or suspicion on the plain declarations of their fellow men, the statement is quite sufficient. That at every

and include the decrees of the first council of Jerusalem.—Wilkins's Anglo-Saxon Laws, fol. p. 28.

[1] Luther, (I cannot recall his precise words), used to call the Creeds the science of sciences—the Commandments the laws of laws—the Lord's Prayer the prayer of prayers—the Bible the history of histories. He regarded them as summaries, models, *ἰδέαι*, of all others in their several classes. And the view is as sound as it is deep.

[2] Lib. vii. 281.

link in the chain of transmission such a confidence is absolutely necessary for the reception of the truth—that, where it is wanting, the communication is cut off—that it does not depend upon logical arguments, but on a disposition of the heart—that arguments may be used to guard it from being shaken, but cannot create it—and that it is the result of a divine or supernatural implantation in the mind of a spirit in the hearer *akin* to that which is in the speaker—*συγγενές· οἰκεῖον· χρυσίον θεῖον παρὰ θεῶν*—is the first principle of the Church. And Plato again and again recognizes the same truth. Love, rather than faith, is the word employed by Plato to express this sympathy and dependence of mind on mind. But the terms are evidently interchangeable. There can be no love without faith, and no faith without love.

But the Church, besides this supernatural gift, is provided with a most remarkable array of securities against the attacks of a curious reason, which ought thoroughly to be studied, and the difficulty of arranging them understood, before we can appreciate either the excellences or defects of the system contrived by Plato for a similar purpose. For all the attacks made by reason on revelation are directed to prove it subjective, instead of objective; to make it a creation of human feeling and human fancy, and thus to strip it of authority.

The Church has miracles, persecutions, catholicity, with all the internal organization by which this catholicity is to be maintained—each of which in its place is a proof that what she teaches, she teaches not of herself, but as a communication received from without. But of these Plato was destitute. And how then, as the first founder of a polity, did he propose to prove to himself and others that the forms or *ἰδέας*, with which he proposed to endow it, were really *ἰδέας* of the Divine Being? or rather, first, how

did he prove to himself the existence of such a Being at all? We answer, in the same way in which the existence of the God of Israel was made known to Moses. The parallel is not presumptuous, for scarcely a Father of the Church has spoken of Plato without instituting a similar comparison. Before Plato, as before Moses, there was a visible fact not merely inferring, but exhibiting a Power out of, above himself, and therefore to him divine. What the burning bush was to Moses, the wonders of the heavenly bodies were to Plato. "Look," he says, "at the sun, and the stars, and the moon—at the earth with all its seasons and its beauties [1],—are they not in themselves a power beyond you—a power which you cannot master, which you cannot even equal—which is grander, more permanent, more lovely than any thing which you can create? Is not the very essence of religion the acknowledgment of such a power? Is not the very consciousness of an external world the recognition of its existence? It may be but a shadow of the Deity—a symbol of a far higher power beyond it—a veil to hide his presence—a school to lead you up to him. But in itself it is divine; and therefore there is a God, and all mankind believe it [2]." It is in this sense, he says [3], that the stars, and sun and moon, and planets, are gods—that all things are full of gods—*θεῶν πλήρη πάντα*. That they are not mere material bodies, but are connected in some way or another with mind, he proves by the axiom, that if both matter and mind exist, as we know them from our own consciousness to exist, matter must have been created by mind, the less by the greater, not mind by matter, the

[1] Leges, vol. vi. lib. x. p. 358. [2] Leges, vi. p. 377.
[3] De Legib. vol. vi. p. 377, 378.

greater by the less, and that therefore the existence of matter implies the existence of mind. And in attributing these creations and these movements, so full of order, to spiritual beings, watching over them and tending them as their care—beings who, in his view, deserve our reverence and worship,—Plato only infers a fact, which Christianity distinctly asserts, of the existence of ministering spirits. He does not infringe in the least on the unity of the one supreme God. He represents them as creatures. He only makes the mistake, impossible for a heathen not to make, that the mediation between God and man is carried on through a spiritual hierarchy of angels, not through the Deity himself in the person of our blessed Lord. Ask us, he proceeds, for evidence of the existence of these spiritual powers, and you may as well demand evidence of your own existence.

And let us read the indignant words of Plato himself, and then consider if there is not something wrong, some mistake at the least, in our present cool, conceding, compromising system of rational evidences to prove the being of a God—*πῶς ἄν τις μὴ θυμῷ λέγοι περὶ θεῶν, ὡς εἰσίν; ἀνάγκη γὰρ δὴ χαλεπῶς φέρειν, καὶ μισεῖν ἐκείνους, οἳ τούτων ἡμῖν αἴτιοι τῶν λόγων γεγένηνται, καὶ γίγνονται . . . . . πῶς τούτους ἄν τις ἐν πράξεσι λόγοις δύναιτο νουθετῶν ἅμα διδάσκειν περὶ θεῶν πρῶτον ὡς εἰσί· τολμητέον δέ· οὐ γὰρ ἅμα γε δεῖ μανῆναι, τοὺς μὲν, ὑπὸ λαιμαργίας ἡδονῆς ἡμῶν*—(observe where Plato fixes the true cause of unbelief, not in the head, but in the heart)—*τοὺς δ' ὑπὸ τοῦ θυμοῦσθαι τοῖς τοιούτοις.* It is remarkable also how Plato brings this great fundamental truth, of the existence of a God, under the testimony of the senses—the testimony, out of all the three principles of knowledge within us—" sensation, intellect, and

feeling[1]"—the most accurate, most common, most simple—which is the foundation of our existence—which, when all other truths have been shaken, stood out the last stronghold of belief against Pyrrhonists and Sophists—which brings the peasant and the king, the child and the man, the ignorant and the philosopher, the good and the bad, alike into contact—direct indisputable contact—with a stern objective reality, with a power which checks and controls him, which he cannot master, and in which, though individual facts are fleeting before him, like the changes of a cloud, perishing and rising again with every fluctuation of matter, yet each, the moment it has past, acquires a solidity and eternity—an absolute being *τὸ ὂν*—as immutable as God himself. "What is done cannot be undone." Not even the Deity himself can, in the conception of man, annihilate the existence of a fact any more than he can annihilate his own eternal attributes.

It was the same with the first address of Christianity: "That which was from the beginning, which we *have heard*, which we have *seen with our eyes*, which *we have looked upon*, and *our hands have handled*, of the Word of Life (for the life was manifested, and *we have seen it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us): That which we *have seen* and *heard* declare we unto you[2]." "We cannot but speak the things which we *have seen and heard*[3]." "Thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou *hast seen and heard*[4]."

And what is true of the testimony given by the apostles to the teaching of our Lord is true of the

[1] Τρία δ' ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, τὰ κύρια πράξεως καὶ ἀληθείας, αἴσθησις, νοῦς, ὄρεξις.—Arist. Ethic. lib. vi. c. 2.

[2] 1 John i. 1. [3] Acts iv. 20.

[4] Acts xxii. 15. So also Acts xxvi. 16.

witness given by history to the teaching of the Catholic Church. That such doctrines were taught by it as Apostolic, is an external fact cognizible by the senses, not calculated by the reason.

If this appeal to the senses failed, Plato then fell back on human authority, on the testimony of parents, teachers, and legislators, of all mankind—a testimony in itself a proof that the fact which it witnessed was not a mere human opinion, not subjective. "Study the truth," he says to the young Atheist: *πυνθανόμενος παρά τε τῶν ἄλλων, καὶ δὴ καὶ μάλιστα καὶ παρὰ τοῦ νομοθέτου*[1]. And in the mean time, as Bishop Butler says to the Deist, *ἐν δὲ τούτῳ τῷ χρόνῳ μὴ τολμήσῃς περὶ θεοὺς μηδὲν ἀσεβῆσαι.* But the whole passage should be referred to, and studied with profound attention, as a chapter against Atheism. And thus far for the existence of a God.

[1] De Legib. vol. vi. lib. x. p. 361.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

But for the character and attributes of the Divine Being, Plato was obliged to search elsewhere. No Church had been preserved in his own country to keep up the knowledge of these truths or ἰδέας. In Egypt, indeed, a Church still existed; in Italy Pythagoras had founded another, and confided to it the mysterious knowledge, which he had received from the East, whether doctrines as founded on tradition, or dogmas as opinions of men. And to these Plato did undoubtedly look back with a profound reverence and confidence. But whatever was the belief of his heart, he required something more to *prove* the objectiveness of the theological truths contained in Orientalism and Pythagoreism. There had, indeed, been a primitive revelation, and Plato believed it, and, so far as it might be traced, he enforced implicit obedience to it. Hence his reverence for hereditary forms of worship [1]—his earnest recognition of God as the author of laws and of society; "Was it from a God or from a man that laws first emanated?" Θεὸς, ὦ ξένε, θεὸς [2]—his view of the progress of society, as a declension, not an elevation [3]. Hence it is that his *last* days, as being farthest from the light, are like those of the Apostle, and described almost in the same words [4], when "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without

[1] The Laws.
[2] Laws, vol. vi. lib. i. p. 1.
[3] Repub. lib. viii. xi.
[4] 2 Tim. iii.

natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." And his picture of the early days [1], is of days of bright heroic deeds, when the sons of God, ἔκγονοι θεῶν [2], were still upon earth, knowing and declaring to men the nature of God as of their parent,—σαφῶς που τοὺς αὑτῶν προγόνους εἰδόσιν,—whose declarations we are bound to receive, though they speak without any demonstration, even without probable proof,—to receive as from men, who speak of things, which they have seen and heard in the bosom of their homes: ἀδύνατον οὖν θεῶν παισὶν ἀπιστεῖν καίπερ ἄνευ τε εἰκότων καὶ ἀναγκαίων ἀποδείξεων λέγουσι, ἀλλ' ὡς οἰκεῖα φάσκουσιν ἀπαγγέλλειν, ἑπομένους τῷ νόμῳ πιστευτέον. But with all this reverence for tradition, Plato knew that the tradition before him was corrupt, too corrupt to be taken as a standard of the primitive external revelation. He felt to it as a pious Roman Catholic might feel to the corrupt traditions of his own Church, which, inasmuch as they are corrupt are no traditions at all, but doctrines invented by man and not received from God. They contained truths generally recognized, but truths mixed with strongest suspicions of falsifications, and unsupported by the witness of Catholicity, that is, of many independent Churches radiating from the common centre of an apostolical body, and preserving separately one common form of unchanged traditionary doctrine.

In the absence of this Catholicity, Plato was compelled to look elsewhere for his objective truths relative to the Divine Nature. And he found them in the unvarying immutable principles of the human mind.

[1] See Timæus, vol. vii. p. 12; Critias, vol. vii. p. 128.
[2] Timæus, vol. vii. p. 30.

The first forms or *ἰδέαι* of the Deity he fixes in the Republic [1], and in the Laws [2],—Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Immutability, Truth, Providence. He found them essentially and inseparably connected in the first elements of human reason. He could not conceive power, without somewhere or another Supreme Power,—nor Supreme Power with any mixture of evil, for evil in the heart of man always implies weakness, temptation, defect,—nor power in matter without its emanating from a power in mind, because mind is greater than matter, and the less must be created by the greater, not the greater by the less,—nor power in mind without wisdom,—nor original supreme power without immutability,—nor power, wisdom, and goodness without truth—nor all these combined in God, without a wish to diffuse his blessings—to make others like to himself, and to watch over them when made : *ἀγαθὸς ἦν* [3]· *ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος· τούτου δ' ἐκτὸς ὢν, πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια αὑτῷ.* Hence the creation of the world : *ταύτην δὲ γενέσεως κόσμου μάλιστ' ἄν τις ἀρχὴν κυριωτάτην παρ' ἀνδρῶν φρονίμων ἀποδεχόμενος, ὀρθότατα ἀποδέχοιτ' ἄν* [4].

The chain, which binds together these attributes, is imbedded deeply and immoveably in the human mind, as in a solid rock. No effort of reason can dissever them. We may try to fracture the links, as we may try to conceive the same thing to be and not to be. But we are thrown back baffled and overcome by a Power beyond us,—the Power which framed the mind at first, and stands like a wall of adamant against us, whenever we would presume to pass the barriers which He has erected. And thus though as

[1] Lib. ii.
[2] Lib. x.
[3] Timæus, vol. vii. p. 18.
[4] Timæus, ibidem.

forms of our conceptions they are subjective, wholly subjective, just as the sensation of resistance to the touch, and of heat from burning, are subjective; yet they are objective, inasmuch as they form no part of our own will or reason, are unalterable by ourselves, are obstacles to our efforts of thought, resist us, do not coincide with us. They are as much proofs of a power beyond us, and therefore of a will beyond us, as solidity is of the existence of body, of something which we cannot displace. And yet even in these, the primary truths of reason,—all of them ostensibly reducible under the one great axiom of demonstration, —"whatever is, is," and under the one great principle of morals, that "goodness is power, and vice weakness," and under the one great principle of mind, "that it requires for its full perfection an object like to itself,"—even in these Plato did not dare to trust to the subjective logical power, or what men call reason (as if reason was only calculation by which the links in the chain are evolved), and though with the line of demonstration before him, he referred to an external authority: *παρ' ἀνδρῶν φρονίμων ἀποδεχόμενος.*

But were these then all the forms, attributes, or *ἰδέαι*, which Plato recognized in the Divine Mind? Assuredly not. Plato had a more definite creed—a sanctuary in this temple of truth beyond that vast vaulted nave, into which all mankind might be admitted, who were capable of exercising reason.

The real essence of the Divine nature, it is hard, he says, to discover, and, when discovered, impossible to explain to all: *τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς εὑρεῖν τε ἔργον, καὶ εὑρόντα, εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν*[1]. Again, "Tell us," says Glaucon, "the road to that knowledge, the highest

[1] Timæus, vol. vii. p. 17.

of all—the knowledge of that one true God, of whom the sun is but the type, and the material world, with all its host of ministering spirits, the creature and the shadow—to reach which is the end of all things:" *οἷ ἀφικομένῳ ὥσπερ ὁδοῦ ἀνάπαυλα ἂν εἴη, καὶ τέλος τῆς πορείας.* "Oh, my beloved Glaucon," replies Socrates, "as yet you cannot follow me: were you able you should see the truth[1]." Again, "What is the really good, without knowing which all other knowledge is vain, let us not attempt to see now. It is more than we can reach:" *πλέον γάρ μοι φαίνεται ἢ κατὰ τὴν παροῦσαν ὁρμὴν ἐφικέσθαι . . . . . ὃς δὲ ἔκγονός τε τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φαίνεται, καὶ ὁμοιότατος ἐκείνῳ, λέγειν ἐθέλω*[2]. And whatever might be the theory of Plato as to this *ἰδέα* or form of the Divine Nature, never in any of his works distinctly developed, we know that he held it as an *opinion*, not as an indisputable truth, however consonant with his reason: *ἐὰν ἄρα μηδενὸς ἧττον παρεχώμεθα εἰκότας, ἀγαπᾷν χρή*[3]. And this is the ultimate mystery which hangs over the theology of Plato. Goodness, wisdom, power, benevolence are indeed forms of mind, attributes assigning an end to a work of intellect. But they are not forms of mind in the sense of a pattern or model after which a creation is moulded. And Plato must have had before his mind some more definite notion of the Divine Form, *ἰδέα*, to have traced and realized its image and shadow in every part of the moral and the material universe.

[1] Repub. lib. vii. p. 271. [2] Repub. lib. vi. 238.
[3] Timæus, vol. vii. p. 18; Repub. lib. vi. 238.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

What then was this ἰδέα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, or form of the Supreme God, under which all other emanations of his goodness were to be reduced, as casts are referred to a mould; and which a reason highly enlightened might trace in every portion of the universe? It might not be difficult to suggest an answer. But as it cannot be more than an hypothesis, and should be supported by a minute reference to the scattered hints in Plato, and by a long induction of facts,—and without this must appear strange and fanciful,—it will be better to postpone it. Few things are more likely to prevent the sound study of Plato, or to prejudice sober-minded men against him, than an unsupported assertion that more of truth is found in him than can be proved really to exist. And for this proof there is no space at present.

Of this kind has been the attempt,—encouraged indeed by the refutative analogical arguments used by Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Cyril of Alexandria, and others, but not perhaps justified by their real meaning,—the attempt to find, not merely a Trinity, for *this may be found*, but the Christian Trinity and Λόγος, in the ἰδέαι, of Plato. A satisfactory refutation has been given by the learned Benedictine editors of Justin Martyr [1], and much might be added to their objections.

Of the same kind, and also closely connected with the present subject, is the endeavour to find in Plato a direct prophecy of a communication from God reveal-

[1] Præfat. p. ii. p. x.

ing this ἰδέα, and even of the death and sufferings by which it would be attended. That Plato, with the fate of Socrates, and the madness of the Athenian monster, θηρίον, before his eyes, did anticipate persecution and martyrdom for any one, who attempted to work a reformation, is certain. That he does seem at times to cast his eyes round upon the future with a vain hope that something may arise to realize his notions of a polity, εἴτε που ἐστιν, εἴτε ἔσται[1], is also true. But his expectation is nowhere stated distinctly. And his longing for it, we should remember, was not the longing of ignorance after additional knowledge (for all that he thought it necessary to know he was prepared already to prove, sufficiently for the duties of this life, and the hopes of the next). It was the longing after a Church,—a πόλις. All the great doctrines of revelation, considered as mere speculative truth, would have been indifferent to him, compared with the formation of the society, in which they were to be preserved and exemplified. He had no conception of a perfect image of human nature, nor perhaps of any nature, apart from a *polity*; from a balance, arrangement and right subordination of "many members in one body." And it is here that we are to look, if any where, for a prophecy of revelation,—such a prophecy as meets us in almost every page of elevated heathen philosophy, where the wants, and desires, and capacities of men are stated side by side with the inability of man to supply them, without assistance from heaven.

"Whenever," says Plato[2], "those men who are truly philosophers, whether in a body, or even one of them, having become masters of a state, shall despise all its honours and interests, such as men now covet —shall deem them mean and worthless—shall value

[1] Repub. lib. vi. p. 228; lib. ix. p. 349.
[2] Repub. lib. vii. p. 282.

deeply obedience to law, and the honour accruing from obedience—but above and beyond all shall value justice or the true rights and duties of persons—when in obedience to these rights, and in order to extend them, they shall construct the framework of their city"—then this polity, which we have conceived as a visionary wish, may really be brought to light. It may be difficult but not impossible: *χαλεπὰ μὲν, δυνατὰ δέ πη.*

But (he proceeds immediately, and repeats it again and again) "It is possible on no other condition than the union of absolute power with perfect wisdom in the same hands;" and how far he was from supposing that such a condition could be realized, is seen in the melancholy picture drawn by him [1] of the inevitable corruption of any man, however gifted, however powerful, without a Church, a *πόλις*, already formed to receive him into her bosom at his birth. The very utmost of his hope reaches only thus far: "You may argue that all men must be destroyed by this universal corruption—*ὡς πολλὴ ἀνάγκη διαφθαρῆναι.* That it is hard for any to be saved we all confess. But that in the whole period of the world's duration, of all who appear in it, not one single man should ever escape, one might perhaps hesitate to allow"—*ὡς δὲ ἐν παντὶ τῷ χρόνῳ τῶν πάντων οὐδέποτ' οὐδ' ἂν εἷς σωθείη ἔσθ' ὅστις ἀμφισβητήσειε* [2]. Grant that one such man as we have framed—a man possessing within him all the forms, laws, types, *ἰδέας*, of the perfection of God, should once appear upon the earth, with power sufficient to carry out his views—whether the union in his person of perfect power with perfect wisdom were the effect of some "strange coincidence," or of some "external compulsion," or of some "divine inspiration"—*ἐκ τινὸς θείας ἐπιπνοίας*—or came round

[1] Lib. vi. [2] Lib. vi. p. 232.

in "the fulness of time," with some mysterious cycle of years, in which Providence dispenses upon man more copious gifts of a better spirit[1]—grant this but once, says Plato again and again, and the mystery of this dream-like polity would be realized upon earth[2]. "Whether such an event has ever taken place yet in the boundless course of the past, or is now taking place in some barbarian region far from our sight, or will take place hereafter, I will not say; but that it is impossible no one shall assert[3]; and if we may not see it upon earth, in heaven there is probably a model of this our city, where he who wishes to behold it may see it, and hope to dwell:" *ἀλλ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνάκειται τῷ βουλομένῳ ὁρᾷν, καὶ ὁρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίζειν*[4].

This is all that we can trace of a direct anticipation of a revelation. And yet let us see what follows. How will such a man, or more than man, the king as well as prophet of his subjects, proceed to form them into this perfect polity?

[1] Lib. viii. p. 289.
[2] Lib. vi. p. 228.
[3] Lib. vi. p. 228.
[4] Lib. ix. p. 349.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

He will gather round him, says Plato, the few, the very few [1], in whom the hand of Providence, *θεῖα μοῖρα*, has implanted its highest gifts, *χρυσίον θεῖον παρὰ θεῶν*, of wisdom, and understanding, and virtue, and power, gifts showered out at that time in some special revolution of nature [2]. With them he will proceed to form a society entirely new. He will reject [3] all those, who have been brought up in the evil habits of the times, all above ten years of age. He will take his future subjects as children, and rear them up himself under his own eye, and upon his own plans. He will obliterate all the past, erase from the tablet on which he is to draw the picture of his state, all that interferes with its perfection, and will not touch it till it is cleansed, and ready for his workmanship; neither individual nor state will he touch until they are thus prepared: *μήτε ἰδιώτου, μήτε πόλεως ἐθελῆσαι ἂν ἅψασθαι, μηδὲ γράφειν νόμους, πρὶν ἢ παραλαβεῖν καθαρὰν (πίνακα), ἢ αὐτὸς ποιῆσαι* [4]. He will distribute the powers of the state into two heads, ecclesiastical and civil, so that neither shall trespass on the other—the one to preserve and promulgate the laws and the knowledge of God, the other to defend the state from enemies without and within; the one will be called *πρεσβύτεροι*, the other *νεώτεροι* [5]—both to be associated in the government;

[1] Lib. vi. 233, passim.
[2] Lib. viii. p. 287.
[3] Lib. vii. p. 282.
[4] Lib. iv. p. 230.
[5] Lib. iii. p. 117.

but the presbyters, or clerisy of the state, to form the supreme council of advice. The great business of these rulers will be education: they will watch over the rising character of the young, exercising and testing them [1] with pains and pleasures, and studying to place each in the post most fitted to his character. They will break down all castes, castes of blood, of wealth, of profession, of fashion; and leave, in all these barriers thrown up either by nature or by the vanity of men, passages for goodness and wisdom to rise up to the highest ranks, and for evil and ignorance to sink into the lowest. They will elevate woman to be a companion and help meet for man. They will watch anxiously [2] to raise up a perpetual supply of new citizens for the state; retaining the good within its bosom, and excommunicating the incorrigible. Great pains will be taken that the city does not become either too large, or too small, for the due observance of discipline; (would that the Church of these days would exemplify this maxim also, as the Church did of better times, by breaking up her enormous dioceses!) The eye of the state will be over all. It will embrace all with a common love, unite all as one family, excluding all hatred and dissension, assigning to every one his own peculiar work, and making the good of the whole body to be the good of every member. It will not prohibit the inferior class from agriculture, or from any occupation which may minister to the wants of the body without pampering its vices; but it will dread wealth, as the seed of all evil. It will encourage art, especially music, but make all art an imitation, not of mere fancies of man, but of the true, the beautiful, of the same ἰδέαι, which are the foundation of the whole polity; so that buildings, and paintings, and sculpture, and music, and poetry,

[1] Lib. vi. p. 233. [2] Lib. v. p. 179.

and oratory, and literature, every thing may be formed upon their model—in one word, may be impregnated with the doctrines and affections of true religion[1]. It will provide for the young, from the first dawn of their reason, tales and hymns, which shall teach them, under the charm of music, and verse, and fancy, the doctrines of a sound theology[2]. It will put a poetry into the hands of the elders, which shall elevate them to all noble thoughts and deeds, by placing in their mouths the words and sentiments of the noblest of their ancestors[3]. It will condemn the stage. And how strange a prophecy this must have sounded to Athenian ears, we can well imagine. It will secure for the more gifted of the community an education, which shall raise their reason not only to embrace a faith implicitly, but to understand, arrange, and trace, the bearings of the doctrines, which they are to maintain and inculcate; but the great problem placed constantly before them shall be "to recognize unity in plurality, and plurality in unity"—to lift up their minds from earth to heaven, and to allow of no real good but Him who is the author of all good, the Sun of the Moral World, from whom they derive their light, and through whom they are able to diffuse it[4]. It will mitigate the horrors of war[5], on the principle that a common nature is implanted in them and in their adversaries. It will require neither gold nor silver to vanquish its enemies, so long as it remains at unity within itself; but break it up by seditions and dissensions, and it will fall an easy prey[6]. It will glory in those who died in defending their country, or in the discharge of duty, as in beings of an inspired order, τοῦ χρυσοῦ γένους[7]; "reverencing them as more than

[1] Lib. x. [2] Lib. ii. passim. [3] Lib. iii. p. 95.
[4] See lib. vi. and vii. passim. [5] Lib. v. p. 193.
[6] Lib. v. p. 190. [7] Lib. iv. p. 129.

human," "assembling at their tombs," "believing that they still are watching over their country," and "canonizing them with such honours as the word of God may allow:" *διαπυθόμενοι ἄρα τοῦ Θεοῦ πῶς χρὴ τοὺς δαιμονίους τε καὶ θείους τιθέναι, καὶ τίνι διαφόρῳ, οὕτω καὶ ταύτῃ θήσομεν ἢ ἂν ἐξήγηται*[1]. And, lastly, it will possess every virtue; not as if each member were perfect in all virtues—for the very constitution and unity of a body implies the imperfection of its parts—but each will be perfect in its own work and province, and share in all the goodness of the whole: having a wisdom, and courage, and temperance, and righteousness not its own, by its union with that body in which they each reside[2]. It will become one perfect man; and what the body is, such will be the individual members of it; practising virtue, not from blind instinct, not from expediency, but in obedience to positive laws, enforced by man, as the representative of the will of God; loving goodness for its own sake, for its own intrinsic conformity to that eternal principle of conscience, which assigns dominion to goodness and subjection to vice; not merely looking to another world, though in another world the reward is sure, but happy even in this world, though "scourged and tortured in prison, the eyes burnt out, the body torn to shreds[3]," happy in the rectitude of its own heart, and "a blessing to that nation in which it shall be made to dwell[4]."

Such is the polity of Plato. If the points here thrown together startle the readers by their close parallelism with the Christian polity, let them look to Plato himself, remembering that some of the wisest of Christians have before this been so startled

[1] Lib. v. p. 191.
[2] Lib. v. p. 158, et passim.
[3] Lib. ii. p. 50.
[4] Lib. vii. p. 282.

likewise at it, as to account for it only by a species of inspiration from the same Being who formed the Church. But the chief question to be asked is this: Was Plato an idle visionary? Is the Republic a mere dream? Does it not deserve to be studied most deeply and most patiently, and that, even in parts the farthest removed from our comprehension, as the nearest approach ever made by human reason to anticipate the designs of God? And shall we be startled to find that the same "prophetic eye" which thus traced out so many lineaments of the Church, four hundred years before it was created, was also able to foresee, so far as human nature only was concerned, the phases through which it would pass, and has supplied the best philosophical outline, which has ever yet been given, not only of the civil but of the ecclesiastical history of man. He has done this in the eighth and ninth books; and I propose to give a sketch of them at some future time.

APPENDIX.

RISE OF THE ALEXANDRIAN PLATONISM.

The history of the Alexandrian school occupies a space of about 300 years,—extending from the beginning of the third century, when it was founded by Ammonius Saccas, to about 530, A. D., when the chairs of philosophy at Athens were suppressed by Justinian, and Isidore of Gaza, with his colleagues, took refuge in Persia.

The circumstances which give to it such peculiar interest are chiefly these:—

It is, in the first place, the final development, the last act, in the great drama of Greek rationalism; and it is impossible to contemplate the vast influence, which this spirit, as matured in Greece, has exercised on the destinies of man, whether with regard to the formation of mind, or to the propagation of Christianity, without watching, with great curiosity, its whole course, but especially its close, when it seems to have roused itself from a long torpor, and thrown up, as a last effort, one transient but brilliant flame previous to its final extinction.

In the second place, it stands in a peculiar relation to the noblest and best portion of Greek philosophy. It was a revival of Platonism, but of Platonism in a new atmosphere and soil; and we may observe in this transition a fact like one of the most interesting phenomena exhibited in botany or zoology, when a plant

or animal is enabled to naturalize itself in a strange locality by the extraordinary development of some organ or function originally very subordinate. What in Plato was a *religious philosophy*, became, in the hands of the Alexandrians, *a philosophical religion*; and this is the real distinction, important though minute, between the two schools.

Thirdly, the new Platonism was the form in which the same spirit of Greek philosophy, even when apparently dead, lay hid, from the end of the fifth century, in the monasteries of the East, from whence it was transferred into the West through the works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite. In this, also, it was revived in the fifteenth century by the exiled Greeks at Florence; and in this introduced into England by some of our own great theologians, in the most flourishing period of English philosophy. John Smith, Cudworth, Norris, and More [1], were Alexandrian, not Athenian Platonists; and no little injustice has been done to Plato by assuming them as fitting interpreters of a writer, whom they scarcely quote, comparatively with Proclus and Plotinus; a writer whose practical views and principles were far removed from the mere abstract speculations, to which men, who know little of his system, have persisted in attaching his name [2].

[1] To these may be added Burnett, Widrington, Wilkins, and Theophilus Gale.

[2] Of Plotinus himself, and his doctrines, I have no intention to speak minutely. English readers of the present day must have made far greater progress in a deep philosophy, before they will listen, without ridicule, even to a list of his subjects. Questions "of Fate"—"of the Essence of the Soul"—"of Intellect, and Ideas, and Being"—"How from the First and the One proceeds that which comes after the One"—"Whether all souls be one"—"of the Good and the One as identical"—"of the three principal Substances, and the two Matters"—"Whether there are Ideas of Individuals"—and "How the soul is something intermediate between a divisible

But there is a still more interesting feature in the history of the school of Alexandria—its relation to Christianity.

and indivisible essence :"—these are not questions for English ears in the nineteenth century ; though no sensible man will join in the abuse lavished by Brucker, and other less respectable critics, on the frivolity and absurdity of the abstract speculations themselves, in which the Alexandrian philosophers indulged, and with which it was impossible for them, as deep inquirers, to dispense, without compromising the very foundation of a rationalistic system.

But even the more practical ethics of Plotinus—his inquiries into the nature of man, of virtue, and of the mind—are involved in an obscurity, which will effectually save them, as perhaps he himself intended, from being profaned by vulgar eyes. The first lessons in philosophy, which he had derived, in company with Origen, from Ammonius at Alexandria, he engaged with them not to divulge ; and such a resolution was not likely to render the instruction, which he continued to give, very clear and perspicuous *. Writing he did not practise till he was nearly fifty years old †. Even then his tracts (for they are scarcely more) were confined to a few select readers ; and as he neglected to inscribe them himself, their titles were not a little confused. His subjects were selected without any order, as accidental questions arose ; and they were chiefly addressed as answers to the inquiries of his favourite pupils—pupils, it may be necessary to add, unlike the idle boys to whom the name is now mostly confined ; but learned, hard-headed men, who went to school at forty years of age, and stayed there the rest of their lives ‡. When we add that he could not endure to look over his own compositions—that his eyesight was too bad to read his own writing—that this writing was far from beautiful—that his words often ran into each other—that his spelling was not the most accurate—οὔτε τῆς ὀρθογραφίας φροντίζων, ἀλλὰ μόνον τοῦ νοῦ ἐχόμενος—that he threw down his thoughts upon paper, as he had arranged them in his mind, as if he was copying from a book, and very often in the midst of some ordinary conversation, and without minding interruptions—and that this to the great surprise of his pupils, ὃ πάντες ἐθαυμάζομεν §, was his practice to the last ;—*we* shall not be surprised to find, like

* Vit. Plotin. c. iii. p. 52.
† Ibid. c. iv. p. 53.
‡ Ibid. c. vii. p. 57.
§ Ibid. c. viii. p. 59.

It was raised up as the last and most formidable antagonist of the Christian faith; most formidable from its elaborate assimilation to the system, which it was designed to combat. Alexandria was the arena, in which the Apostolical doctrine and the spirit of Greek philosophy, not limited to any one sect, but drawn together, and with its whole strength

even Longinus himself, 'that with all our anxiety to study the treatises on the Soul and on Being, we are quite unable to get through them *.' One mistake, says Porphyry, Longinus evidently laboured under. He fancied the obscurity of the text was caused by the blunders of the copyist, not knowing that it was the usual style of the philosopher; and that the edition, of which he complained, was, in fact, the most correct extant †. Eunapius, another philosopher of the same school, makes a similar confession ‡. 'From the heavenly elevation of his soul, and the perplexed and enigmatic style of his writings,' Plotinus, he candidly acknowledges, 'was a tiresome and unpleasant person to listen to,'—βαρὺς καὶ δυσήκοος. If it had not been for Porphyry himself, who threw his language into shape—as a French writer has done for the modern philosophy of Mr. Bentham—and, in the language of the Greek biographer, like an electric conductor, brought down his thoughts to the level of 'mortals' understanding,' they would still have been soaring in a region far above the ken of even a philosophic eye.

Probably few readers, in this degenerate day, will assent to the notion, that Porphyry, with all his merits as a polisher and interpreter, has reduced the lucubrations of Plotinus to that perfect facility and clearness—εἰς τὸ εὔγνωστον καὶ καθαρὸν—for which Eunapius gives him credit. If the Alexandrian system is to be studied, it will be chiefly through the commentaries of Proclus, who has imbibed far more of the clearness, and even of the eloquence, of Plato, and relieves the dryness of his metaphysical discussions by occasional bursts of poetry, and at all times by the elaborate ingenuity with which he converts into allegory the most simple words of his text-book.

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* Epist. Longin. Vit. Plot. c. xviii.

† Plot. Vit. c. xx. p. 70.

‡ Eunap. in Porphyr., p. 9. Edit. Boiss.

concentred from every school and teacher, met face to face. From thence the conflict spread to Athens, Antioch, Rome, and the most civilized parts of the Roman empire. On each side were ranged the most eminent men of the times; men who, if deficient, when compared with the great fathers of Greek philosophy, in principles of arrangement, close logical accuracy, and strict harmony of taste, were yet as giants, both in learning and talent:—on the one side, Clement, Basil, Origen, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustin, Epiphanius; on the other, Ammonius, Plotinus, Porphyry, Longinus, Proclus, Julian, Iamblichus, and Hierocles—with Plato, Aristotle, and all the leaders of the Grecian schools, except the Epicureans, strengthening their rear—and a vast reserve of force, composed of the Oriental traditions and sects, lying, ready to be employed, not only in the outskirts of Christianity, but in the very bosom of the outward Church. It was no longer a combat between the purity, sobriety, and wisdom of Christianity, and the gross forms of paganism, its idolatry and sensuality—but between the Truth, both moral and spiritual, as revealed to the Apostles, and the shadows or forerunners of the same Truth, revealed by the God of nature to human reason. On both sides there was truth—grand, profound, indisputable truth—which neither party denied. Each combated in the name of one God, the maker of all things, the preserver of man; each blazoned the name of that one God in the mysterious union of three principles; each fought consciously under the presence of a cloud of witnesses, as a spectacle to a celestial hierarchy, engaged in guiding, comforting, and supporting the weakness of human nature; each made the soul every thing, and that soul immortal; each acknowledged the degradation of his nature; the need of a divine influence to purify it; the vision

of God himself as necessary to accomplish its perfection; an internal inspiration from the Deity as the only true channel of knowledge; a law of pure, elevated, self-denying morality; the duty of detaching man's soul from all the lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the eye; testimony as a foundation of truth, and faith as the condition of knowledge. Each had its ancient records, its tradition, its scriptures, its commentaries, its typical interpretation, its apostolical succession—χρυσέα σειρὰ—its outward forms, rituals, and ceremonies, even its miracles: one was the parhelion of the other. Which was the genuine system became the only question; and thus, precluded from the ordinary modes of combating an antagonist-system by condemnation and refutation—each carried on the conflict by copying the movements of the adversary, imitating his excellences, moving arm for arm, foot for foot, so as to perplex the spectator with a strange identity, and, in the absence of historical knowledge, to raise no surprising doubt as to which copied and which originated. Augustin himself declares, that any Platonist might become a Christian, "paucis mutatis verbis et sententiis." Hence it is that both Romanists, like Petavius, and ultra-Protestants, like the whole host of modern Dissenters—each, anxious to find precedents and excuses for tampering with a strict definite creed—have delighted to confound Christianity with Platonism; forgetting that the doctrines, however similar in themselves, rested and were defended on totally distinct principles—Christianity, on Holy Writ and Apostolical tradition—Platonism, on human reason; and not distinguishing between so much of the early teaching of the Church, as was avowedly the result of human reason, and that which it held as revelation, prior to and paramount to reason. The former may indeed be compared, and not unjustly,

with Platonism; the latter is wholly independent of it.

For the reason which developed the new Platonism of Alexandria was of a very high order, and accompanied for the most part, and for a time, with a pure and elevated morality. It followed, that in a number of points the two systems coincided. So far as human reason was rightly employed by the Platonists, it led them to the great truths of religion, which were also contained in the Christian revelation. And so far as the Christian fathers rightly exercised their reason in applying, illustrating, and corroborating their apostolical creed, or in investigating questions independent of it, so far they trod in the same steps with the heathen philosophers. To suppose that there should not be a close and striking resemblance between the two systems would be to imply that the truths of sound reason are not the truths of inspiration; or that reason under the Gospel must be a wholly different thing from reason under nature [1].

There is, however, another circumstance more nearly affecting our own age, which compels attention to the New-Platonic system. There is a great tendency in the present day, among the rationalistic school, both of Germany and France, to revive it. The Oxford Plotinus is only one of a series of republications of Alexandrian [2] writers, by Boissonade,

[1] Some writers of a peculiar school * have been so anxious to confound the Christianity of the Alexandrian fathers with the Alexandrian Platonism, that they have actually converted the Museum into the Catechetical school; an hypothesis notoriously false.

[2] It is unnecessary to give specimens of the spirit in which the Alexandrian writers are now, and have been before, put forward by modern rationalists; but any reader who wishes

* Centuriæ Magd. I. l. 7. p. 397. Hospinian De Origin. Temp. iii. c. xv. p. 413.

Cousin and Creuzer. Taylor lately translated into English some of the works of Proclus. And it is singular that the attention of even such men as Mr. Knox and Bishop Jebb seems to have been turned in the same direction; as if they saw something in the temper of the times, which led them to anticipate the restoration of the Platonic system under this form.

It is evident that men of deep thought and warm feelings, though they shake off the authority of revelation, and the precise doctrines of ecclesiastical tradition, cannot rest satisfied without some form of religious belief. If they refuse to receive one from others, they must invent one for themselves; and by the necessary workings of the human intellect, which seeks for strict unity in all things, this belief will take, under their hands, the form of a pantheistic system, more or less degenerating into Spinosism. Although they reject the authority of the Church, they must obtain some sanction for their creed beyond their own individual opinion. And they will seek and find it in that portion of philosophy, and especially of the Greek philosophy, which corresponds most nearly with their own views; and in the general sentiments of heathenism, which they will trace by the help of bold allegories and symbols in the polytheistic mythologies of antiquity. Precisely a similar course was adopted by the Alexandrian rationalist of the third century. And it seems probable,

to examine the statement may find them in the following references:—Cousin, Præfat. Gener. ad Procli Opera, vol. i. p. 69, 60, 24, 111, 25; Præfat. ad Comment. in Alciab. Prim., vol. ii. p. 9; Thomas Taylor, Introduct. to Translation of the Comment of Proclus on the Timæus, vol. i. p. 47; Marsilii Ficini in Plotinum Procœmium, vol. i. p. 17. Creuzer edit.; but especially the preface to the French translation of Creuzer's newly published work on the Symbolism of Ancient Mythology.

that wherever ecclesiastical authority is destroyed, in an age of so-called civilization, there Christianity will soon have to struggle with a philosophical creed, resuscitated under a similar shape, and for a similar purpose, as 1600 years ago. There is a pantheism approaching upon us; partly an importation from the metaphysical schools of Germany and France, and partly the natural growth of our popular literature and mechanics' institutes, in districts beyond the reach of the Church. It is developing itself in the form of Socialism among the lower classes; and of Philosophical Radicalism, as it is affectedly called, in the upper; and we ought to be on our guard against it.

To give a full view of the new Platonic philosophy would require a long and accurate discussion of several questions.

I. We want a candid account of its system, and of the logical dependence of its various parts.

II. We should have a careful comparison of it with the old and genuine Platonism, marking the differences between them; and especially avoiding such idle criticisms and censures as Brucker, and other modern writers, have heaped on both [1].

[1] It is scarcely credible, that any one pretending to the name of a Christian philosopher, having before him the profound logical metaphysics of Plotinus and Proclus, the singular resemblance of the new Platonism in its most important doctrines to the great truths of Christianity, and its evident superiority over the flimsy speculations of most of the preceding schools, should have ventured to speak of it exclusively in such language as the following:—'Ineptum philosophiæ genus.' (vol. ii. p. 190, § 1.) 'Invenustum pullum Veneris' (p. 358); 'crassus enthusiasmus' (p. 365); 'furor fanaticus' (p. 367); 'gentis frivolæ superstitio' (p. 376); 'pestilentissimorum hominum audacia' (p. 379); 'inanes sine mente sonos' (p. 383); 'delirantis ingenii somnia' (p. 385). But Brucker, with all his admirable industry, was not a deep philosopher, and (we perfectly agree with Creuzer) was 'little capable of appreciating a Platonic system.'

III. Then should follow a similar comparison between it and the Christian philosophy of the catechetical school of Alexandria, with which it has been so often confounded.

IV. We require a comparison between it and Gnosticism; showing the identity of the stock from which they both sprung, namely, the self-will of reason combined, as it always is, with a great disposition to servility; but marking the differences between them—differences which mainly consisted in these two points: first, that the Gnostics partially acknowledged the Christian revelation—the Platonists rejected it: and, secondly, that the Gnostics, though their system was evidently connected with the logical metaphysics of the East, professed to hold it on the principle of implicit faith, while the Platonists avowedly worked out their tenets by human reason. One was reason under the garb of faith, the other faith under the garb of reason.

V. It would be interesting to inquire into the coincidence between the esoteric theology of ancient heathenism, and the metaphysical interpretations forced by the Alexandrians upon the symbolism, under which that theology had been gradually veiled.

These, however, are not the questions into which I propose to enter at present. There is a previous inquiry more immediately interesting to ourselves, and which will take us into a much more open and easy field.—What was the history of the rise of this new rationalistic religion? and was there in that history any thing analogous to that which is passing before our own eyes, and which may presage a similar result?

To understand, then, the rise of Alexandrian Platonism, we must first realize to ourselves the state of the civilized world, and of the human mind, at the period when it commenced and flourished.

It is not an uncommon error to speak of the declining days of the Roman empire as a time of general irreligion; and Gibbon's sneering language has been borrowed as an accurate statement, even by persons professing a knowledge of the facts sufficient to enable them to explain the history of early Christianity [1]. Perhaps no epigram was ever hazarded by an historian more false in all its parts than Gibbon's declaration, that "the various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful." On the contrary, the popular feeling enlisted itself on all sides, as it always must do, in the worship of exclusive peculiar deities. The reason of the philosopher was employed in showing, not that all these forms of devotion were equally false, but that all were equally true. And the toleration of the magistrate, though extensively given, was conducted, so long as it was possible to maintain a state religion, upon the partial and exclusive principle of recognizing no creeds but such as were hereditary, national, or Roman [2].

But without entering at present on this very interesting inquiry, it may safely be asserted that the prevailing temper of the public mind, at the beginning of the third century, was a deep, sincere, overwhelming sense of a power presiding over man, above him, but close to him; in whose hands man was a toy to be sported with, or an embryo to be moulded into form; but to whom, in all his actions, he was bound to look up as a weak and dependent creature. This feeling, rightly directed, is religion: abused, it becomes superstition. But it is something very distinct

[1] Gibbon's Decline, vol. i. c. 2; Paley's Evidences.

[2] See this point elaborately proved in Walck. de Roman. Tolerant. Nov. Comment. Gotting., tom. iii.

from that cold, self-important, presumptuous spirit, which marked a preceding age with epicurism, scepticism, and atheism. It is something far higher and better; and at the period of which we are speaking, it had spread over all ranks, the emperor as well as the peasant, and had penetrated especially the schools of philosophy.

A Christian will view it with interest, as a providential preparation of the soil for the reception and growth of Christianity. The historian will look to its origin; and here the first phenomenon which presents itself is the confluence, under the Roman empire, of the Eastern and Western world.

Without any minute analysis of causes, it is a fact, that from the most remote antiquity a different character has been stamped on these two branches of the human race. Climate, soil, natural constitution, habits, institutions, even the physical geography of countries, may have caused the difference. But to illustrate it generally, and with those qualifications, which must be implied in speaking of human nature in masses and large descriptions, it consisted in this: that in the East man is everywhere impressed with the religious instinct mentioned above; that is, with a profound abiding consciousness of a real, living, controlling power existing above him in a distinct personality. In the West, this instinct is deficient, and at times seems wholly lost. The eye of the East is always turned upward, and fixed on a Being like to, but greater than itself. The eye of the West has no such vision, and either sees nothing, or wanders about capriciously upon any chance object that occurs. The East contemplates persons; the West studies things. Persons and Things form the two great divisions of the universe; and according as men's minds are bent on one or the other, not only their religion but their politics, morals, arts, man-

ners, and philosophy will take their peculiar form and complexion.

Thus religion in the East was a worship and adoration: in the West, it became speculation and theory, or an engine of government, whether political or moral. In the East, philosophy was employed in imagining a spiritual hierarchy of angels and spirits, demons and æons. In the West, it analysed ideas, or generalised the laws of nature. Morals in the East were founded on religion. The whole code of ethics resolved itself into obedience to God, imitation of God, union with God. In the West, it is a scheme of calculation, a balance-sheet of pleasures and profits, or a deduction from intellectual relations. Government in the East absorbs the whole body of the state in the person of its head. The many are lost in the few, or rather in the one; and if the obedience of the subject is voluntarily rendered under the influence of the predominating idea, by the same influence the caprice of the ruler is itself subjected to a spiritual authority above him[1]. The West is the land of democracies. In the East, belief rests on testimony, and education is carried on by authority. In the West, truth is argued out, and tested by its accordance with the reason or opinion of the hearer. Even where authority prevails, and ordinary men are willing to submit to it, its moral influence is not sufficient, but, as in the system of Romanism, requires to be supported by a physical arm. Even the arts partake of the same distinctive character. In the East, in all their greatest works, these were employed to realise before men the presence of some gigantic power, which they were bound to obey. Architecture was thus their chief province;

[1] See this point eloquently illustrated in Burke's Speeches on Warren Hastings.

and where painting and sculpture were introduced, they were made vehicles for suggesting mysteries, or were tied down by rigid laws [1], which still maintained the principle of slavery even in the exercise of fancy. To raise a pyramid as a tomb for a single coffin; to excavate mountains into temples; to bridge over seas for the passage of troops; or cut a canal through an isthmus, were all efforts embodying one common idea, the idea of power. In the West, art performs very different functions, except when imbued with the spirit of the church. It pleases the eye, ministers to comfort, spreads luxuries, facilitates independent exertions, increases the power of the individual, instead of exhibiting a power above him; is regulated by no fixed laws; embodies no moral institutions; is pervaded by no high sentiment; is destitute of unity and grandeur; is, in fact, a mere plaything, or tool. Before the creations of Eastern art the individual is lost and overpowered. Before those of the West he is raised into self-importance, and triumphs in his own superiority.

Hence, also, the different spectacle which history presents on each side. There, vast massive empires, spreading over immense regions, consolidating a variety of races, preserving their outward form and principles of polity throughout the changes not only of years but of dynasties, so that the history of the East three thousand years back is its history to-day —a form of government absolute and fixed, transmitted, unchanged, from hand to hand through internal usurpations and foreign conquests—a religion dogmatic, mystical, and hierarchical—a code of laws exalting the human will on one side, as much as they abased it on the other—and a system of subordination in society, making of one class gods, and

[1] Laws of Plato.

of others slaves: this is the general sketch of the history of the East. In the West, it is very different. *Here*, Society, instead of exhibiting a tendency to concretion and centralization, is every day breaking up and crumbling to pieces. Each separate locality begets a distinct national character, and a separate civil polity. History is full of migration and colonization. Changes, not merely of persons but of principles, creep on, converting monarchies into democracies, and democracies into monarchies. Military prowess — birth — wealth — intellect, succeed each other as elements of power and authority. Laws accumulate on laws—races exterminate races—religion, from a vast imperative, external system, kept sacred from violation by its followers, dwindles into a plaything for the reason, or an instrument of human selfishness. The basis of society, if basis it can be called, is no longer immutable law, but expediency or passion. The future is every thing, and the past nothing. The unity of the body is lost in individual will; and the active, spontaneous, self-seeking element in the human mind developes itself with an energy tending to subvert all external control—to sweep away laws in politics—forms in common life—hereditary institutions, and even fundamental axioms in morals and religion—till it sinks down for a time exhausted in the ruin which it has made, and gives scope for the Eastern principle to assert a temporary sway.

This was the condition of the western world at the commencement of the second century. Human intellect in Greece, let loose from all restraint of authority, had run through its natural career of dogmatism, doubt, and scepticism[1]. School after school had risen

[1] See this strongly described, Just. Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryp. p. 217. Journal des Sçavans, 1717, Juin, p. 654.

and fallen; and philosophy, in mere weariness and despair, was thankful for any authority which might excuse it from doubting any more. In Rome the human will had run through a similar course in the political convulsions of democracy, and willingly succumbed to the tyranny of the emperors, as the only safeguard against its own excesses. The calamities, also, of the civil wars, heightened by the subsequent atrocities and commotions, to which the empire was exposed under many of the emperors, and even the numerous natural prodigies of famine, pestilence, and earthquakes prevalent at that period, contributed to encourage, as Thucydides observes of Greece, the general tendency to superstition. In many cases, indeed, this tendency developed itself in the form of fatalism, or, what is nearly akin to fatalism, a belief in chance [1]. The superstition is the same in each. In each there is the same sense of an overruling power, before whose caprice man is wholly helpless; and whether this power be a person, or a law, or the negation of all law, the effect is the same, of crushing man's energies and reason.

In the meantime, the foundation of Alexandria had opened a passage for the dogmatism of the East into the heart of Italy and Greece. The Grecian cities of Asia Minor had been permeated by the same spirit, through their connexion with Syria and Pergamus. Even before this, the invasion of Persia by Alexander had effected a singular fusion of western and oriental ideas [2], and the Roman conquests had ended in bringing back into the metropolis, not only the spoils

Hermiæ Irrisio Gentil. sec. xix. Tatian, Oratio ad Græcos, § 3. 5, pass. xli.

[1] Tacitus.

[2] Plutarch expresses this strongly: *ὥσπερ ἐν κρατῆρι φιλοτησίῳ μίξας τοὺς βίους καὶ τὰ ἤθη, καὶ τοὺς γάμους καὶ διαίτας.* De Fortun. Alexand. p. 329. Arrian, vii. 11, 14.

of Asia and of Egypt, but their opinions and gods. Chaldees and Magi, Gauls and Jews, priests of Isis and worshippers of Serapis swarmed in the capital itself; and the mode in which the worship of the last-mentioned god forced its way into Rome is a fair indication of the general progress of religious sentiment: —First celebrated in private chapels—then publicly prohibited—then its temples ordered to be destroyed —then permitted within a mile of the city [1]—then excluded only from the pomœrium [2]—then formally recognized and established. The most rigid principle of Roman policy, namely, the exclusion of all foreign worship was too weak to resist the popular feeling. The altars of Serapis and Isis, says Tertullian [3], were ordered to be overthrown by the senate, and were restored by the violence of the people. Even when the public soothsayers had commanded the demolition of their temples, the decree was reversed by the triumvirs [4]; and even the discovery by Tiberius of the profligacy of the priests of Isis could put no check on the mania for adopting their worship [5]. But a religious spirit must embody itself in a definite creed, and in some positive form. And here was the difficulty. Throughout the whole of what was then considered the civilized world, definite creeds and positive forms had almost ceased to exist; and the mode in which this obliteration had been effected is worthy of notice. The great hierarchies of the East, especially of Egypt and Persia, which had been in those countries the original depositories of religious knowledge, and had fenced it round with singular precautions—with castes and ceremonies, and mysteries, and the exclusive possession of science [6]—had been undermined first

[1] Dion Cassius, lib. liv. c. vi. [2] Ib. lib. xl. c. xlvii.
[3] Advers. Gentes, lib. i. c. x. Apolog. c. vi.
[4] Dion Cassius, lib. xlvii. c. xv.
[5] Josephus, Antiq. lib. xvi. [6] See Dionys. Halicarn.

by their own abuse of their own authority, and then by the overthrow of the established political dynasties, either through foreign conquest or internal faction—and the spiritual supremacy in each case passed evidently into the hands of the civil power. Even the few hints now remaining of the state of Persia after the accession of Darius are full of interferences with religion on the part of the State. The same may be said of Egypt. Heathenism, as well as Christianity, had its princes who cut off the ears of their Magi, or burned them alive, plundered their temples, killed their sacred animals, established new idols, and patronized self-taught reformers, and new-invented rituals; and it is not a little remarkable that this transference of spiritual power from the church to the state commenced at a parallel period, about the sixteenth century, both in the Diluvian and Christian æra. Zoroaster, Budha, Confucius—the Luthers of their day—all seem to have appeared about the same time.

In Greece and Rome authentic records commence at a similar stage of history. The origin of both in colonization cut them off more or less from the roots of their ancient traditions and hereditary hierarchies [1], and the scene opens with a view of the State in full possession of the spiritual rule. If in Greece oracles and family priesthoods imposed some check on the original regal powers, it seems to have been slight.

[1] The oft-quoted words of Plato in the Timæus (vol. vii. p. 8. Leip. edit.) are too striking to be omitted. Solon, he says, on inquiring among the Egyptian priests, found that neither himself, nor any other Greek, knew scarcely an iota of ancient history—*σχεδὸν οὔτε αὐτὸν, οὔτε ἄλλον Ἕλληνα οὐδένα οὐδέν, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, εἰδότα περὶ τῶν τοιούτων.* 'The Greeks are always in their childhood,' was the priest's address to him. *Νέοι ἐστὲ τὰς ψυχὰς πάντες· οὐδεμίαν γὰρ ἐν αὐταῖς ἔχετε, δι' ἀρχαίαν ἀκοὴν, παλαιὰν δόξαν, οὐδὲ μάθημα χρόνῳ πολιὸν οὐδέν.* 'Ye have not among you one ancient dogma derived from the tradition of your fathers, nor one branch of knowledge covered with the hoar of time.'

And the history of Calchas, in Homer, probably indicated a general contempt for the heathen Church, and its natural consequences, a curse from heaven, and dissension among men. When the civil power passed into the hands of the people, the spiritual supremacy attached to it was exercised, as it naturally will be, when religion is left at the mercy of popular will. The gods were maintained as a popular part of the government, and ridiculed by the very mob that adored them, as images of Romish saints are first prayed to for assistance, and then pelted, if assistance is withheld. They were worshipped with plays for the amusement, and with sacrifices for the dinners, of the populace. Religion became a luxury of the people—at least, the pretence of religion—and so long as this was secured, reason might speculate at will, and exhaust every form of infidelity or heresy. And the influx of foreign deities was such as to become a standing jest against the nation [1].

In Rome, much more vigorous efforts were made to save the nation from this last curse, and to guard some definite line of religious belief. Though the church—to use a word which will familiarize the fact to our mind—was but an establishment,—the creation of the civil magistrate, with Romulus and Numa for its founders,—they took care to give it some kind of independence by forming its priests or clergy into colleges (*collegia et sodalitia*), and perpetuating them by the privilege of co-optation. To secure its uniformity still more, they inculcated, as a fundamental maxim of state, the principle of an *hereditary national* religion [2]. 'The Gods of their fathers,' the Roman

[1] Strabo, x. 18. Plat. Repub. lib. i. sec. 1. Wetstein, in his notes to Acts xvii. 16, has collected the principal passages illustrating the δεισιδαιμονία of Athens.

[2] Livy, lib. i. c. 20. Cicero de Legibus, lib. ii. c. viii. Warburton, Divine Legat. vol. i. p. 308. Tertull. Apolog.

worship,' 'the established creed,' were their watchwords. They prohibited most rigidly the introduction of any foreign worship. Again and again the Bacchanalian and Egyptian rites were driven from the city, not only as immoral or seditious, but simply as foreign. As conquests absorbed new nations into the body of the state, care was taken to preserve both the strictness of this principle and the necessary toleration, by receiving the deities of the conquered people into the Roman Pantheon. But this could only be done by a formal declaration of the legislature; and even when the emperors had united in their own persons the sacerdotal and political authority, the consent of the senate seems to have been necessary to sanction such an act. Where this admission did not take place—and still it was necessary to tolerate the religion of the conquered state—the same principle of adherence to an hereditary national creed was recognized as the basis of toleration. The suppression of human sacrifices in Gaul is supposed by some to have been the first instance of an interference with the established religion in a subject province. Each was permitted to retain what had been received from their fathers. As Rome gradually became the point of confluence of foreigners—an epitome of the habitable world—ἐπιτομὴ τῆς οἰκουμένης [1]

c. v. p 56. Eusebius, Hist. lib. ii. c. ii. Livy, lib. iv. c. 30; lib. xxv. c. i.; lib. xxxix. c. ix. Valer. Maxim. lib. i. c. iii. See especially the advice of Mæcenas to Augustus. Dio Cass. lib. lii. c. xxxvi. Sueton. Octav. c. xcvi. Spartianus Adrian. c. xxii. Tacitus. As the subject is one of great interest at the present time, we may subjoin one or two more references, which any one who wishes to pursue it will find useful. Bynkershoeck Opusc. i. p. 341. Walsh, in Nov. Soc. Reg. Gotting. Comment. t. iii. p. 8. Everh. Elmenhoerst, Not. ad Minuc. Felix, p. 25. edit. Orizel. Christ. Kortholtun Pagan. Obtrectat. lib. i. c. v. p. 75.

[1] Athenæus, lib. i. c. xvii.

—it became necessary to allow the practice even there of foreign rites to foreign visitors, and thus to make it also, what Theophilus called it, *ἐπιτομὴ τῆς δεισιδαιμονίας*. But this was permitted with restrictions, which, according to Dionysius, were so successful for a time, that the state at large was not infected with a passion for these rites: *οὐδενὸς εἰς ζῆλον ἐλήλυθε τῶν ξενίκων ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἡ πόλις δημοσίᾳ*[1]. For instance, in the case of the suspected Bacchanalia, if a foreigner conscientiously felt bound to celebrate them, he was to give notice to the Prætor Urbanus; the prætor consulted the senate in a house of at least one hundred. If the ceremony was allowed, it was to take place with no more than five persons present—no pecuniary fund was to be raised—no priest or regular officer to be appointed. And in other respects precautions were taken, not unlike those with which the meeting-houses of Dissenters were first permitted in our own country, when dissent had become hereditary[2].

It was not possible, however, that any civil restrictions should keep up the distinctions of religions when they were thus brought together side by side into one vast metropolis. It became more and more expedient, and even necessary, to enlarge the Roman Pantheon. Whether Tiberius really wished to enrol our Lord in it or not, there is nothing in the statement itself at variance with the later policy of Rome. Severus sacrificed in his chapel to Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus[3]. And Heliogabalus advanced still further, and proposed to amalgamate together all the religions of the empire, with himself as their type and centre;

[1] Dion. Halic. Antiq. Roman. lib. ii. p. 91.

[2] See Ralph Fabrett, Syntag. Inscript. on the Bacchanal Stat. in Museo Vindobonensi. Drakenborch, Not. ad Livium, tom. vii. p. 197.

[3] Lamprid. in Alex. Sever. c. 22.

or, as Lampridius more strongly asserts, as the one God and one priest: 'ne quis Romæ Deus, nisi Heliogabalus, coleretur—ut omnium culturarum secretum Heliogabali sacerdotium teneret[1].' This last fact is perhaps the nearest approach to a public recognition by the State of the principle of syncretism in its widest form: for Julian excluded Christianity. But the act of an Heliogabalus can scarcely be reckoned as an act of the empire; and it is remarkable, that with this one exception, the opposite principle of an Establishment was preserved almost uninterruptedly at Rome, and regulated the conduct of the Christian emperors as well as of the heathens.

State policy, however, is one thing, and public opinion another;—and the deep religious feeling of the age, coupled with the variety of existing religions, led necessarily to the formation of a syncretistic system, which should recognise truth in each and all, and frame some theory by which they might be reconciled together. This was done in one shape by an easy and popular abstraction. 'In this battle of religious systems,' says Maximus Tyrius, 'in these factions and dissensions, you may trace throughout the whole world, one according voice and rule, that there is one God, the King and Father of all; and many other gods, children of the supreme God, who are associated in his rule. This says the barbarian and the Greek, the native of the continent and of the island, the wise and the unwise[2].' And the Alexandrian philosophy was nothing more than the expansion and logical evolution of this popular syncretism —an attempt of human reason to justify that assent of the heart to a great truth, felt too deeply to be denied, but for which it had no definite authority—no-

[1] Lamprid. in Heliogab. c. 3.

[2] Max. Tyr. Dissert. xvii. p. 193. So also Minuc. Felix, s. xix.

thing but a mass of witnesses contradicting each other in particulars, and agreeing only in the foundation of their statements.

But if it was thus impossible even for the persevering State policy of Rome to exclude the syncretistic spirit from its Empire, we may expect to find that spirit still more triumphant in a spot, where the same causes for its spread existed, and no such policy was ever exerted. And the history of Alexandria, the first seat of the New Platonism, is too full of curious hints and instruction to ourselves, to be passed over lightly.

The New Platonism grew up in a Grecian city, founded in an Egyptian soil by a foreign conqueror, apart from any local or hereditary associations of feeling—and on the very spot where former kings of Egypt, dreading the innovations of Greek colonies, had planted a garrison to drive them off[1]. The village Racotis, which that garrison inhabited, became Alexandria. It was laid out by Dinocrates with all the systematic regularity of Grecian art, on a plan indicating at once the gigantic and the novel character of the foundation. And it was solemnly consecrated by sacrifices both to the gods of Greece, and Apis the deity of Egypt[2]. The very object of its establishment was to form a connecting link between the east and the west, and to bring into one focus the commerce of the world[3]. It was adorned from the first with temples to Isis, as well as to the gods of Greece, and peopled with a mixed assemblage of Egyptians φῦλον ὀξὺ καὶ πολιτικὸν—mercenary and seditious troops, like the Mamelukes of later ages—τὸ μισθο-

[1] Strabo, Geog. xvii. p. 1142; Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. c. 10; Diod. Sicul. lib. xvii. p. 200; and Achill. Tat. lib. v. c. 1, 397; Savary's Letters on Egypt, vol. i. p. 21. 42.

[2] Arrian, Exped. Alex. lib. iii. c. 1.

[3] Arrian, Exped. Alex. lib. iii. p. 105, ed. Gronov.

φορικὸν πολὺ καὶ ἀνάγωγον—and a confluence of Greeks from the west—μιγάδες Ἕλληνες [1]. To this was added a large body of Jews, to whom was assigned a district and ethnarch of their own, pretty much as was afterwards the case at Rome [2]. Alexander himself had already embodied in himself the principles on which it was founded, and was subsequently to rise to eminence. His Greek origin and eastern tastes, his boldness, ambition, and personal beauty —his instruction in the school of Aristotle—his affectation of intercourse with philosophers—his passion for literature, and especially for Homer—his purveying for Aristotle's menagerie—his efforts to blend together the Persian and Grecian manners—his abandonment of his hereditary country and institutions—his sensuality—and, not least, his assumed respect for the deities of all countries alike, the God of the Jews as well as the gods of Greece—ending in the impersonation of himself as Bacchus, and his claim to a relationship with Jupiter Ammon, are all features subsequently developed in the history of his own city, and important to be noticed as giving a compendious view of the causes, which paved the way for the establishment of a Syncretistic Theology within its walls.

His plan for Alexandria was followed by his successors. It became an immense reservoir for all classes of people—the largest emporium in the world —μέγιστον ἐμπορεῖον τῆς οἰκουμένης [3]—the chief of cities, 'vertex omnium civitatum [4],' the μεγαλόπολις ἢ πολύπολις Ἀλεξάνδρεια [5]—or, as it is called by Eustathius, 'the city'—as only second to Rome [6].

[1] Strabo, from Polyb. lib. xvii. p. 1131, ed. Fal.
[2] Joseph. Antiq. lib. xix. c. 5. s. 2.
[3] Strabo, lib. xvii. p. 11732.
[4] Amm. Marcell. lib. xxii. c. 16.
[5] Philo ad Flacc. vol. ii. p. 541.
[6] Iliad. B.

Not only commercial men were brought there in numbers, but students from all quarters flocked together to its schools—εἰς ἣν καὶ ἡ πανταχόθεν συνεῤῥεῖ νεότης τῶν περὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἐσπουδακότων[1]—and no less than fourteen thousand are said to have been accommodated there at one time. 'I see among you,' says Dion Chrysostom, 'not Greeks only, or Italians, not merely Syrians, Libyans, Cilicians, Ethiopians, and Arabians, but Bactrians and Scythians, Persians and Indians, who flow together into this city, and are always with you[2].' And the fact will not be lost among those who look at the growth of our own enormous towns in the present day,—on the numbers of foreigners who are settling in England, as Englishmen are settling abroad—upon the tendency of inventions in the present day to root up as it were the whole population from the place of their birth, and send them floating about the world, or to gather them in large masses,—and who remember that the wisest of ancient legislators, when they were endeavouring to preserve purity, and permanence, and religious truth in their system, thought few things of more importance than to limit the size of their cities, and to exclude foreigners from settling in them.

From this mixed race of inhabitants there was formed at Alexandria a singular national character, which also, perhaps, may suggest some thoughts of things nearer to ourselves.

Its natives were, in the first place, most industrious. It was full of manufactories. They appear to have had little leisure for anything but business:—'Civitas,' says Hadrian, 'in qua nemo vivat otiosus[3].' They were celebrated for their manufactories

[1] Gregory Nyss. in Vit. Gregorii Thaumaturgi.

[2] Orat. Πρὸς Ἀλεξαν. p. 252.

[3] Vopiscus in Vit. Saturn. Hist. August. Script. p. 245. ed. Salon.

of glass and paper, and especially what we should call Manchester wares[1]. 'Without eyes to see,' continues Hadrian, 'with gout in their feet, gout in their hands, they still find something to do.' Other communities of no mean origin have thought quiet contemplation and retirement necessary for social as well as individual good; but the Alexandrians thought otherwise. Of course they were very wealthy. 'Civitas,' says Hadrian in the same letter, 'opulenta, dives, fœcunda.' Every luxury of life was to be found within its walls. The ecclesiastical authority in Egypt had no sooner been destroyed, or transferred to the civil power under the Ptolemies, than the people, from a remarkable attachment to old institutions, seem suddenly to have passed into an opposite extreme, and to have embraced with their whole heart the doctrine of anti-finality in reform. Such was their love indeed of reform, *τοσαύτην που νεωτεροποιΐαν αὐτῶν*, that Augustus[2] was obliged to place them under a peculiar jurisdiction. No senator was allowed to travel among them without permission from himself—their old magistrates were suppressed, and the power centralised at Rome; and the greatest precautions were taken to prevent them from constant revolts. 'They were liberals,' says Hadrian[3], 'liberi, novarum rerum usque ad cantilenas publicas cupientes;' *κοῦφοι*, says Dion Cassius[4]; *κουφότατοι*, adds Herodian, *καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς βραχυτάτοις ῥᾷστα κινούμενοι*[5].' A very slight offence was sufficient to provoke them to *threaten* a rebellion, *μάλιστα ἐκ μικρῶν καὶ ῥᾳδίων τυχόντων πεφυκότας ἀνερεθίζεσθαι*[6]. 'At the slightest spark' they would kindle into a flame;—'genus hominum seditiosissimum,' says Hadrian: but

[1] Cicero in Rabir. Posth.
[2] Dion Cass. vol. i. p. 647.
[3] Vopisc. Vit. Saturn. p. 245.
[4] Vol. i. p. 647.
[5] Anton. et Get. lib. iii. p. 173.
[6] Phil. Jud. adv. Flac. vol. ii. p. 519. ed. Mang.

we may add, on the authority of Cæsar, that, not unlike more modern rebels of manufacturing towns, their violence ended often in threats—*θρασύνασθαι μὲν προπετέστατοι, ἀνδρίσασθαι δὲ ἀσθενέστατοι*[1]. Nothing, we learn from another passage in the same author, could be bolder than their language: they spoke out in their meetings everything which came uppermost—*ἐκλαλῆσαι πᾶν, ὅ τι ποτ' ἂν ἐπέλθῃ σφίσι προπετέστατοι.* At the first quarrel they thought nothing of bloodshed—*διὰ φόνων ἀεὶ χωροῦντες.* Whether they were in the habit of using pikes and clasp-knives Dion does not say: but he does add, that when a real battle was at hand,—or, as we may translate his words, when the soldiers made their appearance, they proved sad cowards; *πρὸς δὲ δὴ πόλεμον τά τε δεινὰ αὐτοῦ φλαυρότατοί εἰσι.* Even their dinner-parties were not of a more pacific character. 'As for our friends from the fair Alexandria,' says Athenæus[2], 'when they invite a party, they bellow, they scream, they swear at the butler, the footman, and the cook. The children run helter-skelter, crying and blubbering with boxes on the ear. Even the lady of the house does not escape a hearty cursing.'

With this turn of mind it is little surprising that they were not over-respectful to their rulers; *πεφύκασι δὲ πῶς εἶναι φιλοσκώμμονες, καὶ λέγειν εὐστόχως ὑπογραφὰς ἢ παιδιὰς, ἀπορρίπτοντες εἰς τοὺς ὑπερέχοντας πολλὰ χαρίεντα μὲν αὐτοῖς δοκοῦντα, λυπηρὰ δὲ τοῖς σκωφθεῖσι*[3]—'They are extremely fond of scoffing, and ridiculous representations of persons, and jesting; they throw out against their governors a number of jokes, which seem very witty to themselves, but are

[1] Dion Cassius, vol. i. p. 621. [2] Lib. x. c. 17.
[3] Herodian, lib. iii. Anton. et Geta, p. 173.

not a little painful to the parties ridiculed.' Whether or not their print-shops, if they had any, were full of caricatures of their sovereign and their magistrates, no ancient writer informs us. Nor can we trace any hint of daily and weekly publications issued for the purpose of libelling them. That they hissed and hooted their kings may perhaps be more easily inferred. But the usual form for expressing their contempt was the use of nicknames. And few of their sovereigns seem to have escaped in this way from their libellous tongues, *ἀνείμενα στόματα καὶ ἀχάλινα*[1]. Tryphon, Physcon, Kakergetes, Cybiosactes, Philadelphos, Philopator, Philometor, and Auletes, are each names thus applied. To Sosibius, the minister of Ptolemy IV., whom they wished to get rid of, they gave the title *πολυχρόνιος*—the long-lived. Antony's courtiers, probably not the most delicate of men, were *κοπρεῖοι*[2]. Demetrius of Adramyttium, who was charged with stealing a bracelet in the temple of Jupiter, was *Ixion*. Caracalla was the old *Jocasta*. Apion, a very laborious, or as, in older English, we should say, a very painful grammarian, was *μόχθος*, *labour* itself[3];—and Eratosthenes, another learned man, who never gained a prize, but came in second for everything, they appropriately denominated *Βῆτα*. 'You can easily understand,' says Hadrian, 'what they said of me after I was gone, as well as of Verus and Antonine[4].' Hadrian, however, smiled at their jests. Caracalla viewed them rather more seriously, and repaid them with a general massacre[5]. With this abusive turn, when they had nothing to fear from

[1] Philo de Virtut. vol. ii. p. 570 ; Dion Chrysostom, *Πρὸς Ἀλεξαν.* p. 249.
[2] Dion Cass. vol. i. lib. i. p. 264.
[3] Herod. p. 174.
[4] Vopisc. in Vit. Satur. p. 245.
[5] Dion, lib. lxxvii. p. 1307.

their superiors, was coupled, as we may see in certain leading characters of our own day, a most prodigious power of nauseous and fulsome flattery, when there was any thing to hope. 'Of all the people in the world, none,' says Philo[1], 'were so ready as the Alexandrians to salute and worship Caligula as a god;' —Δεινοὶ γάρ εἰσιν τὰς κολακείας, καὶ γοητείας, καὶ ὑποκρίσεις, παρεσκευασμένοι μὲν θῶπας λόγου. It was not likely that this turbulent mob, μιγὰς καὶ συνπεφορημένος ὄχλος[2], should possess any of that virtue, which the Romans called gravity; but for which the Greeks, as being destitute of the thing, seem almost to have wanted a name. In their extreme levity, and frivolity, and taste for dissipation, the Alexandrians remind us of the French character, before it was soured and darkened by the crimes of their revolutions, but which is not yet obliterated. It is in France that great efforts seem to be making for the revival of Philosophical syncretism. 'Would you only, gentlemen, be serious and attend for a few minutes,' is the exordium of Dion's address to them[3],—ἄρα γε βούλοισθ' ἂν, ὦ ἄνδρες, σπουδάσαι χρόνον σμικρὸν, καὶ προσέχειν—'Since,' he proceeds, 'your whole life is spent in childish sports, and in attending to nothing —sports, and pleasure, and laughter, you have in abundance—and,' he adds, in happy ambiguity, καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ γέλοιοί ἐστε—'but as for seriousness, I discover nothing but an entire want of it. If only once you could be silent when you are addressed on a grave and serious subject—interested and attentive as you are at a horse-race, or a concert, or an opera-dance. One hour only, a single hour of sober thought,' he adds, 'would in such a life as yours

[1] Philo Jud. de Virt. vol. ii. p. 570; Herodian, lib. iii. p. 173.

[2] Philo de Virtut. vol. ii. p. 563.

[3] Dion Chrysostom, Orat. Πρὸς Ἀλεξανδρεῖς, p. 245.

be everything—like an hour's rest to a man in a delirium.'

Horse-races and music appear in fact to have been the absorbing passion of Alexandria—*μαινομένην*, says Chrysostom, *ὑπὸ ᾠδῆς καὶ δρόμων ἱππικῶν*[1]. 'The moment you come into the theatre, or on the course, you lose all sense of common things. Men, women, and children, are seized with a sort of phrenzy; you fight, scream, howl, throw stones at each other, dance about like madmen.' Whether they paid thousands a year to foreign singers, for singing what they could not understand, history does not inform us. But evidently in the Alexandrian, as in the London season, concerts and the opera were the prevailing amusements. Probably, they named their carriages, horses, and other things, which they most valued, after their favourite performers—rose up to receive them with shouts when they appeared on the stage—buried them under crowns and chaplets. Chrysostom's account seems to imply as much. He says nothing, however, of their turning their holiest temples into concert-rooms, and setting the most solemn mysteries of their religion to music, to be sung in them by profligate men and women, in the place of their priests.

The kind of music which they preferred we may learn from Athenæus. Unlike the simple sober strains, to which Plato, with so many other wise legislators, attached such importance in the formation of character (and the value of which may be traced even in the Christian state)—the Alexandrians delighted in full orchestras; and scarcely Exeter Hall or the Worcester Music Meeting could produce a band of instruments more various, or with harder names, than the list of Athenæus[2]. Twenty kinds of

[1] Dion Chrysostom, Orat. Πρὸς Ἀλεξανδρεῖς, 252.
[2] Lib. xiv. p. 654.

flutes, the lyre, the magadis, the barbiton, the nabla, the pectis, the clepsiambos, the skindapsus, the pariambis, the psaltery, and the enneachordon—they played upon like first-rate performers—*ἐμπειρῶς ἔχουσι καὶ τεχνικῶς*. And all of them it is feared would have come under the ban both of Plato and Lycurgus, as *πολύχορδα, καὶ παναρμόνικα*. In one respect, indeed, their taste for music had penetrated further than it has yet reached with ourselves. We have indeed ministers of state, archbishops, and bishops, princes of the blood, and the greatest conqueror of the day, who direct ancient concerts, and preside over musical festivals. But if we may trust Dion (and there is too much honesty mixed with his bitterness to doubt his word), even the Westminster Halls of Alexandria, its House of Commons, and its London University College, could not resist the general mania. He assures us that judges, and barristers, and professors, not only directed the singing of others, but sang themselves, *πάντες δὴ ᾄδουσι, καὶ ῥήτορες, καὶ σοφισταὶ*—and he adds presently the *δικαστήριον*. 'Pass by the courts of law, and you cannot tell, from their singing, whether they are drinking, or trying causes. If you happen to live in the neighbourhood of a professor's house, you would never discover it by the sounds that issue from it. Go to the exercise ground, they are drilled to music. Consult a physician, he asks your symptoms, and feels your pulse, to some popular tune. Your whole life,' he concludes, 'has nearly become one great revel,' —*κινδυνεύει δ' ὁ βίος σχεδὸν ἅπας γεγονέναι κῶμος εἷς*[1].

The musical meetings, however, of Alexandria gave way at times to their passion for horse-races. Ascot, Doncaster, and Epsom, great as their fame is, must

[1] Lib. xiv. p. 259.

fail before the interest of the course of Alexandria. If an Egyptian Taglioni made a whole theatre leap from their seats in ecstasy[1]; if every nerve was strained[2] to catch the quavers of a Pasta from Heliopolis or Memphis[3]: 'when,' says Chrysostom, 'you come on the race-course, who can describe your cries, and tumult, and agony of interest; your rapid change of gesture and colour, and,' he adds, 'your cursing and swearing (*βλασφημίας*)[4]? If instead of looking on the horses, you were yourselves under the lash, you could not be in a worse state'. It would appear they crowded into the theatre, or, as it should be expressed to modern ears, into the grand stand, fighting, and falling upon, and abusing each other, as if life depended on the event. During the running, 'they could neither sit nor stand.' 'Pale with anxiety'—'huzzaing to the horses'—'with every hand stretched out'—'leaping up like madmen'—'fighting with each other'—'uttering all kinds of horrible language'—'very often cursing their gods'—and at times 'losing their clothes in the struggle'—they presented, says Dion, the spectacle of a people 'gigantic as a Hercules in strength, but like Hercules in his state of phrenzy, fallen and foolish[5].' And he does not seem to think that such amusements would give the most favourable impression of a national character, or that it was one of the points on which a nation might pride itself before foreigners. 'They are,' he says, 'but trifles; but how can it be, that a people who make so much of trifles can be sober-minded in any thing[6]?'

On one point, indeed, of great public interest in England, they appear to have manifested what to us must seem a singular indifference. For the drama,

[1] *ἀναπηδᾶν τῶν ὀρχηστῶν*, p. 256.
[2] *συντείνεσθε τοῖς ᾄσμασι*, ib.
[3] Ib.
[4] Lib. xiv. p. 260.
[5] Ib. p. 264.
[6] Ib. p. 260.

as poetry in its grandest form, they seem, like ourselves, to have cared little. Gay spectacles, processions, and melodramas, they obviously enjoyed. If any theatre in London would have attracted an Alexandrian, it would have been Astley's. But what is more extraordinary, he would have disdained even Van Amburgh's exhibition of lions and tigers, and all the shilling monster exhibitions, which captivate an Englishman's curiosity. Ptolemy Soter, indeed, once procured, at some expense, for his theatre-royal, a black camel and a piebald man. The poor Alexandrians, however, were unaccustomed to such sights. They took fright at the black camel, and ran out of the theatre. And the piebald man they only laughed at, greatly to the disappointment of the monarch[1]. Upon which king Ptolemy presented both to Thespis the flute-player, just as a royal or illustrious personage might now present Signor or Signora Such-a-one with a Swiss giantess, or the living skeleton, or the Chinese dwarf, instead of a gold snuff-box, or a diamond ring.

But we must not dwell more on these trifles, though, as indications of the soil in which the Alexandrian philosophy took root and flourished, they are far from being valueless or without instruction to ourselves; and it is singular how precisely the same traits of character developed themselves in Rome under similar religious and political circumstances.

There were two other features of more direct importance in the history of Alexandria, namely, the literary and religious policy of its rulers.

Wherever there is an independent hierarchy, or, if we may venture again to apply the word to heathenism, a church, it is its business to educate the people. The Egyptian priesthood, indeed, like the Roman,

[1] Lucian, Prometh. vol. i. p. 21.

appear to have exercised their spiritual power rather in crushing the reason than in developing it; and under their rule education must have been very limited. They needed a Reformation—a Reformation, which should compel them to discharge their duty; not one, which should deprive them of the office. For the *instruction* of the young and ignorant, let us never forget, especially in these days, cannot be carried on without simultaneous *education*. While you are teaching facts, you must also inculcate principles, and form habits. But *education* cannot be conducted without *authority;* and *authority* without *religion* can never be *permanent*, or, if permanent, must be *ruinous*—and therefore none but a *religious* body can be wisely entrusted with a national education. But the Egyptian sovereigns, like modern German princes, and modern English ministers, thought otherwise. Perhaps their priests or clergy were incorrigible; perhaps the great truths which that clergy evidently held of old had been lost in a general corruption; perhaps the idolatrous system, with all its licence of popular superstition, which had been permitted, if not introduced, as a mode of familiarising common minds with general principles of religion, no longer admitted of being purified, as certainly its support was incompatible with the diffusion of a sound education—or, it may be, the existence of a church possessed of such spiritual power was by no means the wish of the princes, whether Persian or Grecian, who claimed their crown, as William III. was advised to do, by right of conquest, and resolved to concentrate in their own persons both the state and the church.

We can well, indeed, imagine them unwilling to return under that heavy yoke, which Diodorus describes, when even the king's dress, and dinners, and promenades, were subjected to the inspection of their

priests. But in avoiding this extreme, like kings of more modern date, they fell into the other. Ptolemy Soter[1], like Alexander before him, found himself, by conquest, the sovereign of two nations (for the Greeks in Egypt really formed a distinct people), each with its own religion. As a military man, he probably cared little for either; but as a conqueror it was his interest to conciliate both his Papal Egyptians and his Protestant Greeks; and if he had been blessed with a parliament, he probably would have commenced his reign with recommending an Act of Comprehension. But as this great happiness was denied him, he seems to have contented himself with following the plan of his illustrious predecessor who founded the city, and raising temples to Isis, side by side with what the Egyptians probably called chapels or conventicles to Venus, Bacchus, and Hercules. To identify the two systems more closely, he placed a statue of Jupiter in one of the Egyptian temples, just as an English king, who came at the head of an army from foreign parts, might have longed to hear the works of Calvin and Zwinglius read by a bishop of the English church in the cathedral of St. Paul; and to fuse the rival sects, as he probably considered them, still more, he sent for his own high-priest from Eleusis. His liberal sentiments, indeed, appear to have taken a far wider range than a mere toleration of two distinct national religions, under articles, as it were, of union. Theodorus, surnamed the Atheist, having been banished from Athens on account of his profligate opinions, and subsequently from Greece—though, according to Diogenes Laertius, he overthrew all religious creeds—*παντάπασιν ἀναίρων τὰς περὶ θεῶν δόξας*[2]—

[1] A curious parallel case among many others in history may be found in the reign of the Sultan Akber, as given in Mr. Elphinstone's valuable History of India, vol. ii. p. 316, 323.

[2] Lib. ii. p. 57.

was not only *introduced at court*, but received and employed; and, says Matter, very naively, 'I do not find that any one there was shocked at his doctrines'—'Je ne trouve pas que sa doctrine ait choqué personne[1].' Stilpo, whom Ptolemy expressly wished to take with him from Megara, had also been banished even from the democratical Athens for the same offence. 'Do the gods,' said Crates to him, 'delight in prayer?' 'Ask me,' was Stilpo's reply, 'not in the street, but when we are alone[2].' And the only interdiction on opinion, which we hear of, was a prohibition laid upon Hegesias the Cyrenaic against promulgating his inconvenient doctrine of suicide[3]. Perhaps the Ptolemies had anticipated the modern discovery, that punishment only tends to encourage crime. Or, perhaps, they did not deem blasphemy a crime at all, but merely an innocent mistake—a view of their opinions, which might be confirmed by their friendly association with the mistaken parties.

One excuse must, indeed, be made for Ptolemy's liberality, that a considerable affinity existed between the Egyptian and Greek religion—the same affinity, in fact, as between popery and dissent. The Egyptian was the oldest—not so old as the great fundamental catholic truths of the unity of the Godhead, and of his relation to man, out of which it sprang, and which it suffered to be overlaid and buried with the grossest popular superstitions—but far older than the modern theories which the 'boys' in Greece had contrived to frame out of its remnants. For these Greeks had been severed from its hierarchies, knew nothing of the meaning of the forms and symbolical doctrines which they had retained, were left without restraint to interpret and modify them at will, and thus converted them, by the working of their own

[1] Matter, Sur l'Ecole d'Alexand. vol. i. p. 68.
[2] Laert. lib. ii. art. Stilpo. [3] Cicero, Tuscul. ii. 1—34.

minds—the people into an easy, luxurious, anthropomorphic theology, embodying the vices, the politics, the imagination, and the moral character of Greeks—the philosophers, into empty words. And yet, by a little compromise on each side—by stretching the several creeds here and there—by procuring from the Egyptian papal chair some relaxation of that contemptuous excommunication, which they seem to have dealt out on their Greek ultra-Protestant brethren—and by bringing the Greeks (which it was no hard matter to effect) to adopt something of the doctrines of Egypt, even if they would not submit to its hierarchy, Ptolemy might hope to produce a general harmony and union conducive to the civil security of his new dominions. Of course he would be most jealous of the old papistical Egyptian system, as most powerful, and most threatening to the absolute supremacy of the crown; and his dissenting subjects would receive the largest encouragement. He would be anxious, as William III. was, for the peace of their consciences, and the binding them together—to support him against any attack whether within or without.

But Ptolemy (whether Soter or Philadelphus, is not clear, nor is that point material) seems to have advanced a step further. If any religion at all is to be preserved in the midst of many discordant sects, no one of which is to be exclusively acknowledged as true, it must be by inventing a doctrine, which shall contain those points only, in which all agree. To perform this work of abstraction or eclecticism, it is not necessary to apply to any abstruse philosophy. It is soon done by a rough pantheistic creed, not entering into details, but framed with strength sufficient to act like the bed of Procrustes on all the other creeds submitted to its measurement—lopping off some, and lengthening out others; and the introduc-

tion of the worship of Serapis into Egypt seems to have answered this purpose. That Serapis was the pantheistic emblem, there can be little doubt :— 'Deum ipsum,' says Tacitus [1], 'multi Æsculapium, quod medeatur ægris corporibus, quidam Osirim, antiquissimum illis gentibus numen, plerique Jovem, ut rerum omnium potentem, plurimi Ditem Patrem, insignibus quæ in ipso manifesta, aut per ambages, conjectant.' The answer given by Serapis himself, who may naturally be considered a good judge, to Nicocreon, king of Cyprus, who begged, in the general perplexity, to know who he was, ran as follows :—

Εἰμὶ θεὸς τοιόσδε μαθεῖν, οἷον κ' ἐγὼ εἴπω.
Οὐράνιος κόσμος κεφαλή, γαστὴρ δὲ θάλασσα.
Γαῖα δέ μοι πόδες εἰσὶ, τάδ' οὖατ' ἐν αἰθέρι κεῖται.
Ὄμμά τε τηλαυγὲς λαμπρὸν φάος ἠελίοιο [2].

The same theory is contained in the received explanation of the basket on the head of the statue ; the three heads of animals—the lion signifying the present time, the dog the future, and the wolf the past. The snake twined round the figure was a symbol of the zodiac. 'On s'étoit aussi formé de Sérapis une idée comme d'un dieu unique, qui comprenoit les attributs de toutes les autres divinités, ce qui donna lieu aux payens de publier, que les Chrétiens et les Juifs, qui ne reconnoissoient qu'un seul Dieu, adoroient Sérapis [3].' And thus the Emperor Hadrian writes to Severianus :—'Illi qui Serapim colunt, Christiani sunt ; et qui se Christi Episcopos dicunt, unus illis Deus est. Hunc Christiani, hunc Judæi, hunc omnes venerantur gentes [4].'

This view is still further confirmed by the remarkable fact of the subsequent association of Isis in the

[1] Hist. lib. iv. c. 84. [2] Macrob. Saturnal. lib. i. c. 20.
[3] Académie des Inscript. tom. x. p. 500.
[4] Vopiscus in Vit. Saturn. p. 245.

worship of Serapis. To embody the object of adoration in a female form is the natural tendency of polytheism and idolatry, because it unites the two opposite tendencies of looking up and looking down, worshipping a Being as our God, and at the same time commanding it as our creature. It is evident in the corruptions of Christianity as well as in heathenism; and Serapis originally shared the honours of his temple at Sinope with a sister goddess, Proserpine. But the philosophical unity of pantheism would have been sadly embarrassed by this dualistic worship; and accordingly the embassy, it would seem, who were sent to invite Serapis into Egypt, were strictly ordered to leave Proserpine behind. But the popular instinct appears to have prevailed over philosophy, and very soon to have supplied the place of Proserpine by Isis. The worship of the two was united; and, in the end, Isis seems to have concentred the chief devotion to herself, much by the same steps which led even Christians first to the associated and then to the almost exclusive adoration of the blessed Virgin [1].

Even of old, Isis had usurped much of the worship of Osiris; and she was herself evidently an emblem, like Serapis, of a pantheistic creed. 'Te tibi, una, quæ es omnia,' is an inscription to her, found at Capua. 'Sum quidquid fuit, est, et erit, nemoque mortalium mihi adhuc velum detraxit,' was inscribed, according to Plutarch, in the temple of Minerva, who was also Isis [2]. So also Apuleius [3] introduces Isis giving this account of herself:—

'En adsum, rerum Natura parens, elementorum omnium domina, sæculorum progenies initialis, summa numinum, regina manium, prima cœlitum, Deorum, Dea-

[1] Ammian. Marcell. xx. 16. Brotier, Tacit. Not. et Emend. ad Hist. iv. 84. Montfaucon, Antiquités Expliq. tom. ii. p. 149, *et seq.*

[2] Plut. in Isid. et Osirid. [3] Metamorph. lib. xi. p. 747.

rumque, facies uniformis, quæ cœli luminosa culmina, maris salubria flumina, inferorum deplorata silentia nutibus meis dispenso :—cujus numen unicum multiformi specie, ritu vario, nomine multijugo totus veneratur orbis. Me primigenii Phryges, Pessinuntiam nominant, Deûm matrem; hinc autocthones Attici Cecropiam Minervam, illinc fluctuantes Cyprii Paphiam Venerem; Cretes sagittiferi Dictyanam Dianam; Siculi trilingues Stygiam Proserpinam; Eleusinii vetustàm Deam Cererem; Junonem alii, Bellonam alii, Hecatam isti, Rhamnusiam illi; et qui nascentis Dei Solis inchoantibus illustrantur radiis, Æthiopes, Ariique, priscâque doctrinâ pollentes Ægyptii, ceremoniis me propriis percolentes, appellant vero nomine Reginam Isidem.'

If Isis could venture to appear under so many aliases, it is not surprising that some difficulty should be found in tracing and identifying Serapis. Montfaucon [1] has discussed the question of the antiquity of his worship in Egypt previous to the Ptolemies. Some have supposed him to be the same with Osiris, but Herodotus does not mention him, and no trace of him occurs in the Isiac table. By some of the fathers he is supposed to have been Joseph, son of Jacob; and Augustin [2] represents him as Apis, king of Argos, and adds a very forced etymology for the *Ser*. The Abbé de Fontenu, in an essay on the history of Sinope, from which the statue appears to have been brought [3], has endeavoured to trace it originally from Egypt, through either the Syrians, Phœnicians, Colchians, or Milesians, all of whom were connected with Egypt and Sinope. We learn from medals that the worship prevailed in Asia Minor, in Thrace, on the coasts of the Euxine, at Athens, in Mœsia Inferior, Arabia, Phœnicia, and Syria; but without more precise dates than we possess, little can be inferred as to its antiquity and original locality. Even the

[1] Vol. ii. p. 2. liv. i. c. 10. [2] Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 5.
[3] Académie des Inscript. tom. x. p. 500.

place, from which Ptolemy procured the statue, is a matter of doubt. The best authorities name Sinope; others, Pontus; others, Seleucia;—Isidore says Antioch. According to Athenodorus, it was ordered to be made by Sesostris on his return from his conquests; and the hint is not without its interest, as connecting, in another instance, a pantheistic creed with the political rule over several nations with distinct religions. Montfaucon seems to doubt, if the real figure of the original statue was known: but Clement gives an interesting fact, that it was composed (may we not think with a symbolical meaning?) of every kind of metal and precious stone—gold, silver, brass, iron, lead, tin, sapphire, bloodstone, emerald, and topaz, —not, as Gibbon renders it, laid on in plates[1], but melted together apparently into a sort of mosaic enamel: λεάνας οὖν τὰ πάντα καὶ ἀναμίξας ἔχρωσε κυάνῳ[2]. Clement states that it was black, like some of the most ancient idols of popery.

Tacitus has narrated at length the circumstances which induced Ptolemy to procure this idol, and the various fables connected with its arrival in Egypt; and it must be confessed they are very suspicious. But the only point of interest at present is the ignorance of the Egyptian priests respecting it, and the assistance given in obtaining it by Timotheus, the priest of Eleusis, who appears to have been the clerk of the royal closet, and director of Ptolemy's conscience, and to have been at hand for the occasion. Macrobius distinctly states that the Egyptians were compelled to acknowledge the new deity against their will—'tyrannide Ptolemæorum pressi'—and that, as his worship included practices at variance with the rites of the country, his temple was not admitted

[1] Hist. c. xxviii. p. 113.
[2] Clement. Alexand. Protrep. c. iv. sec. 48.

within the pomœrium. It was placed accordingly in Rhacotis, and a temple raised for it, which, in splendour and the number of its columns and statues, was rivalled only by the Capitol of Rome [1]. For though the nation originally abhorred the new religion, the state had funds, which it could and did employ in propagating it—funds probably administered by a committee of Ptolemy's Lords of the treasury.

Two more traits may be mentioned which are not without interest; the liberty which Ptolemy [2], it is said, took of burying one of his Mistresses, Blistichis, under the shrine itself; and the received character [3] of the god. In the words of the Abbé de Fontenu, 'C'est de ne faire que du bien à tout le genre humain, et de le combler de ses bienfaits'—no bad illustrations of the influence of a pantheistic scheme on the respect of its followers, and of its own lax indulgent morality. The last-mentioned feature naturally soon attracted a crowd of votaries. 'Serapis omnium maximus Egyptiorum deus,' says Augustine. 'Serapin dedita gens superstitionibus super alios colit [4].' 'Alexandria Serapin atque Isin cultu pæne attonitæ venerationis observat [5].' We soon find a temple at Athens; and at last, though not without resistance, the worship penetrated into Rome.

'Il est vrai,' says Montfauçon [6], 'que Rome s'opposa long temps à l'introduction de ces monstrueuses divinités. L'an 686, Piso et Gabinius, consuls, les chassèrent de la ville. Quatre ans après, par un décret du sénat, les temples d'Isis et de Sérapis furent rasés jusqu'aux fondements. On acheva de les détruire après que sept ans furent écoulés. Le culte Egyptien s'y glissa encore de nouveau, et auroit fait de grand progrès, si Agrippa

[1] Amm. Marcell. lib. xxii. c. 16. [2] Clement. Alex. *sup.*
[3] Académ. des Inscrip. tom. x. p. 500.
[4] Tacit. lib. iv. Hist. c. 83. [5] Macrob. Satur. lib. i.
[6] Antiq. Expl. vol. ii. pp. 2, 273.

édile ne l'avoit défendu de nouveau, et n'avoit ordonné qu'on ne pourroit l'exercer qu'à cinque cent pas loin de la ville et des faubourgs. Sous l'empire de Tibère le sénat fit de nouveaux efforts pour chasser les dieux Egyptiens. Mais ils forcèrent tous les obstacles, et s'y établirent si bien, qu'un grand nombre de lieux publics prirent le nom d'Isis et de Sérapis, et que leur culte ne céda depuis à celui de pas un des autres dieux. Ils les habillèrent à la Romaine, et les Grecs à la Grecque.'

These are but imperfect hints; and the whole history of Serapis is acknowledged to be full of difficulties. But there seems some foundation for the suggestion, that Ptolemy, instead of being urged by a dream to introduce this new deity into Egypt, was in reality pursuing a politic and well-concocted scheme —just such a scheme as would occur to any ruler, whose subjects professed different religions, while he himself cared for none, and was only anxious to undermine the influence of an old and established— may we once more say— church? It was a scheme of comprehension, of liberality, in which peculiar doctrines were to be overlooked, differences of forms set aside, recognised institutions neglected—but which offered to conciliate all who cared neither for doctrines, forms, nor institutions, by embodying in one short, easy, indulgent creed, the few points in which all were agreed, and ended all doubts and disputes upon theology by one simple definition of the deity—'Unus qui est omnia'—a definition which has always been the last conclusion of purely human reason, when casting off the shackles of revelation, it has plunged boldly into the depths of theology, but which certainly is not an encouragement to ordinary minds, to try and escape from mysteries, if such a mystery must await them at the end.

It is not impossible that similar designs may have led to the singular patronage extended by the Ptolemies to the Jews, who, as holding the great doctrine

of the unity, were naturally confounded with the philosophical unitarians of pantheism. And if, further, when the Jews were settled in Alexandria, the government was embarrassed by the religious quarrels[1] which perpetually arose between them, and the Greeks, and the Egyptians, (for the atmosphere of Alexandria seems always charged with religious dissension,)[2] we can easily understand the anxiety to discover some middle term—'a tertium quid'—which might stop the pressure from without, and quiet this strife of tongues.

But however well arranged this plan of religious comprehension might be, it is evident that it could have had no effect so long as the education of the Egyptians was in the hands of the ancient hierarchy. You cannot introduce a new religion without introducing at the same time a new system of education. The two go hand in hand. The Ptolemies, like men wise in their generation, neglected neither; and to match their system of religion without a creed, they contrived a plan of education without religion. It could not be otherwise.

The first Ptolemy, though a military man, was also a literary man, like Physcon and several other of his successors. Arrian[3] refers to his works as a valuable authority; and he had gathered round him, as we have seen already, many literary characters from Greece, eminent for their talents, whatever might be thought of their piety. Perhaps no better parallel could be found to the state of the Alexandrian court during his own and succeeding reigns, than that of the court of Prussia under Frederic II. Both were military princes; both estranged from their national

[1] Philo-Jud. Adv. Flacc. vol. ii. p. 521.
[2] Euseb. Vit. Const. lib. iii. c. 4-23.
[3] Præfat. ad Exped. Alex.

church; both drew to their capital a crowd of literary foreigners from a country far advanced in intellect and infidelity. Voltaire, D'Alembert, Helvetius, Maupertuis, and Wolfe, were modern copies of Theodorus, Hegesias, Menedemus, Straton, and Colotes [1]. The verses of D'Arnaud and Algarotti hold about the same rank in poetry, as those of Acantes, Timon, and Sotades. Like the Prussian court, the Alexandrian had its materialist physicians, and its light memoir-writers. The D'Argens, Thiebaults, and La Mettries of the heathen world. There was the same literary rivalry between the king and the scholars; the same 'petits soupers;' the same envyings and quarrellings. 'No sooner,' says Lord Dover [2], 'had he collected round him all that Europe could furnish of men the most eminent in talent, than his court became the focus of the lowest intrigues and jealousies.' And there was the same comprehensive liberality in matters of religion. Frederic patronised Wolfe with one hand, and the Jesuits with the other, making his own infidelity a middle term, just as Ptolemy worshipped Isis and Venus, under the intermediate abstraction of Serapis. And as Frederic founded his Academy, Ptolemy Philadelphus founded his Museum [3].

The history of this Institution is very little known. It is scattered through a number of works; but it is remarkable as perhaps the first attempt to place a purely literary body, dependent wholly on the Crown, at the head of the education of a nation. Perhaps in every country up to that period education had been confided to domestic or religious controul. It was left for Alexandria to establish the first specimen of a London University. It consisted of a large build-

[1] See Diogen. Laert., *passim*.
[2] Life of Fred. II. vol. i. p. 483.
[3] Plutarch, adv. Colot. Moral.

ing attached to the palace (probably a portion of the government offices), like the palatine school of Charlemagne, and was built on a splendid scale. It contained cloisters or porticos—*περίπατον* [1]—for the purpose of giving walking lectures, which had been become an usual form of public instruction since the days of Aristotle; [2] a public theatre or lecture-room —*ἐξέδρα*; a large hall—*οἶκον μέγαν*, where the professors and fellows dined together—*συσσίτιον τῶν μετεχόντων τοῦ Μουσείου φιλολόγων ἀνδρων*: and the celebrated library of 700,000 volumes. The college, with the palace, were both situated in a distinct and fortified quarter of the city, the Bruchion; and a class of critics, who never think of endowments for learning, without also thinking of eating and drinking, have insisted that the name was corrupted from *πυροχεῖον* [3], in allusion to the quantity of provisions consumed by the professors [4]. Without wishing to destroy any analogy which may be supposed to exist between the collegiate bodies on the Nile, and those on the Cam and the Isis, or to deny the etymology itself, which is sanctioned by Eusebius and others, it must be suggested, for the credit of the Museum, that, besides the college buttery, there appear to have been in the same quarter of the city the public granaries, which were burnt together with the library when Alexandria was taken by Julius Cæsar [5]: for Alexandria, notwithstanding its trade with India, its arts, literature, luxury, and busy manufactories, appears to have been full of paupers, crying for bread [6], and dependent for it on the public purse; a strange inconsistency, which we must leave to be explained

[1] Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 793. [2] Aulus Gell. lib. iii. c. 1.
[3] Salmasius ad Spartian. in Hadriano. [4] Antiq. Rom.
[5] Dio, lib. xlii. p. 202.
[6] Dion Chrysost. Πρὸς Ἀλεξανδ. 257.

by the great manufacturers of Manchester and Birmingham [1].

It appears that the Academy of Alexandria was not supported by a regular endowment. Endowments are, in the first place, expensive, and men do not make them without having designs for the public benefit, of more than ordinary elevation and piety. To care for posterity is a good symptom, but it is not common. But they also produce too much independence for an arbitrary government to like them; and they deprive the giver of a gift, of much of that pride and self-congratulation, which is the most common charm of liberality to ordinary minds. Accordingly though the Museum was supported by a common fund—*χρήματα κοινὰ* [2], this was supplied from the treasury; and the accounts seem at times to have been (we have no doubt the sarcastic Alexandrians

[1] One cause appears to have been that there was a party in the country who continued (it is a curious fact) the plan adopted by Joseph in the book of Genesis, and bought up the corn, so as always to have the command of the market. This party seem to have been originally the kings, and subsequently the Roman emperors, whose chief difficulty and anxiety, says Tiberius, was to provide for the supply of corn, when Rome had given up agriculture, and depended for her subsistence on foreign countries. (Tacit. Annal. lib. xii. p. 468. Brotier.) And although those foreign countries were under her own dominion, were her own provinces, close at hand, with no power to dispute her command of the sea, or to encourage them to withhold the supply, we may find that famine and consequent popular turbulence were of common occurrence at Rome; too common for the peace of its rulers, or the good of the people. Sometimes Rome had only supplies for fifteen days (Tacit. Annal. lib. xii. 468); sometimes only for eight (Seneca ad Paulinum, c. xviii.). But then the monopoly of an agricultural interest was destroyed. And who would defend a monopoly in the staff of life? Strange that the government was obliged to succeed to it, and to prevent absolute ruin to the empire, by taking it out of the hands of the millers, and becoming monopolists themselves.

[2] Strabo, ib.

had a word like it) *overhauled* by the Sovereign himself. Athenæus at least has recorded an anecdote, which throws light both on the literary gambols of the monarch and his *savans;* and also on the danger, in such an establishment, of indulging even in rhetorical figures without leave from the crown.

Although the Greeks had neither Quarterly nor Edinburgh Reviews, they had a number of critics; and criticism not of the most liberal or enlightened character, seems to have been one of the pastimes of the court, even in Alexander's time. Even Aristotle thinks it necessary to give rules for answering it—λύσεις[1]—which, to a modern ear, sound rather unworthy of the dignity of a philosopher. Criticism, it may be added, was also one great occupation of the Prussian court, and not of the most benevolent kind. In the Museum, however, there existed a singular specimen of the race, whose delight seems to have been, not in finding faults, but in excusing them,—Sosibius (ὁ λυτικὸς), the apologist, the answerer of objections. In indulging this benevolent practice, he was at times, as we may well suppose, put to some difficulty; and one of his usual methods of rescuing the unhappy attacked from the arms of the critic was by the figure Anastrophe. Thus the distich of Homer was objected to—

ἄλλος μὲν μογέων ἀνακινήσασκε τραπέζης
Πλεῖον ἐόν. Νέστωρ δ' ὁ γέρων ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν.

How could Nestor, the old man, raise a weight too heavy for Diomede, Achilles, or Ajax? The whole difficulty, explained the kind-hearted Sosibius, is removed by the figure Anastrophe. Take γέρων from the second verse, and place it in the first, and then it will mean, that no *other old man* could raise it, but Nestor could. Ptolemy Philadelphus thought fit to

[1] De Arte Poet., ad fin.

make a different use of the same figure. He ordered his Chancellor of the Exchequer to withhold Sosibius' pension, and to declare that it had been paid already. The unhappy Sosibius, pressed perhaps by his Coptic washer-woman, protested that nothing had been received. The king was appealed to, the books produced, and the payment pronounced to have been made. 'Here, sir,' said Philadelphus, 'is your name—so much to Professor *So*tes—so much to So*si*genes—so much to *Bi*on—so much to Apolloni*us* =So-si-bi-us. Take them from their places and put them together, and there is your receipt—by the figure Anastrophe.'

Probably, however, these freaks of royal wit were rare;—and the entertainment of the learned society seems to have been ample and splendid; so much so as to excite considerable envy. Unhappily we are here compelled to confess, that at Alexandria, as elsewhere in learned bodies, the dinner-table comes forward rather too prominently. The Museum itself came to be known as the Αἰγυπτία τράπεζα, Αἰγυπτία σίτησις[1];—and critics have given the same meaning to the term κύκλος, which is often applied to it—suggesting a King Arthur's round table, encircled by literary knights;—οἱ ἐν τῷ Μουσείῳ σιτούμενοι[2] is the common designation of the professors, used by Philostratus; and the sarcastic Timon could not but seize the trait:—

> Πολλοὶ μὲν βόσκονται ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ πολυφύλῳ
> Βιβλιακοὶ χαρακεῖται, ἀπείριτα δηριοώντες
> Μουσέων ἐν ταλάρῳ[3].—

where M. Matter[4]—we will hope more from delicacy to the philosophers than from ignorance—translates

[1] Philostr. passim.
[2] Neocorus, Mus. Alex. p. 2773. Ant. Græc.
[3] Athenæus, lib. i. c. 41.
[4] Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexan.

βόσκονται by 'lose their colour' with study—while Grævius and Gronovius both propose giving an additional blow to the unhappy fraternity, by converting χαρακεῖται, 'hedged and fenced in with books,' or 'armed with pens,' into κορακεῖαι 'chattering like crows in a basket.' One exception we are bound to mention, in noticing this sweeping charge against the members of the Museum, of fattening on a learned leisure. Philetas, one of their most distinguished grammarians and critics, and tutor to the second Ptolemy, is expressly recorded by Athenæus[1] to have so reduced himself by his studies, ἰσχνὸν πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τὰς ζητήσεις, that he was obliged, according to Ælian[2], to wear leaden bullets in his shoes, lest he should be blown away by the wind; and he came to a melancholy and untimely end through the same unwearied exertions in the cause of science, having wasted away, or, as it is expressed, evaporated[3], in an unsuccessful attempt to unravel the sophism of 'the Liar.'

We may easily suppose that a royal Institution of this nature, looking to the lax theology both of those who supported, and of those who subsisted in it, was not agreeable to the old ecclesiastical authorities. If they did not publicly remonstrate, they probably looked on with much jealousy; and as they were a body too strong to be despised, it would appear that the religious prejudices of the country were in some measure consulted by placing the establishment under the superintendence of a priest of Isis—ἱερεὺς ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ Μουσείου τεταγμένος[4]. Whether or not, though a priest, he was also an Egyptian Whig, we do not venture to say. But he was probably one, who did not disapprove the government plan of education, and thought general knowledge and physical science of far more

[1] Lib. ix.
[2] Var. Hist. iv. 14.
[3] Suidas, Art. Philet.
[4] Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 793.

importance to mankind than mere doctrinal theology. That the government were not without adherents in the hierarchy may be inferred from the liberality of Manetho, who, at royal request, translated many of the records belonging to the priests, and divulged their secrets. It may be worth while to add, that if the Egyptian Establishment was propitiated by the appointment at first of one of its own members, the rule does not appear to have been observed afterwards—at least if we may draw an inference from an obscure passage in an anonymous work[1], which speaks of a contest between the Egyptians and the Greeks, 'quis eorum Museum accipiat;' or, as Gothofred himself explains the words, which party should be placed at the head of the Museum. But the translation is perhaps too bold; and, as we hear no more of the priest, it is an easier conjecture that the office sunk into insignificance and contempt, as such offices, under such circumstances, naturally would do.

It must be needless to point out that the University of Alexandria was conducted on the most liberal principles in the admission of its members. The professors and fellows were appointed by the crown, and they comprehended distinguished men from all quarters of the world, τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ ἐλλογίμους[2], without national or religious distinction. The Ptolemies we know gathered round them literary men of all classes; and Zoïlus is the only instance given of a repulse[3]. Homer, indeed, was the idol of the Alexandrian literary world; and we must not therefore be surprised, that to abuse him was no passport to the royal favour. In later times, the emperors exercised the right of appointment. Thus Hadrian gave

[1] Vetus Descript. Orbis, edit. a Jacob. Gothof.
[2] Philostr. Vit. Soph. lib. i. Vit. Dionys.
[3] Vitruv. Præf. ad lib. vii.

a fellowship to the poet Pancrates for suggesting that a newly-discovered species of the red lotus had taken its colour from the blood of a notorious wild boar, which Hadrian had killed in hunting; and that it might be appropriately named after Antinous, who had recently been drowned in the Nile [1]. It is probable that such a test of genius was not thrown away; and that it produced far greater effects in stimulating a rivalry of talent in the same line of compliment, than any examination to which modern students are subjected at an election to our college fellowships. Dionysius of Miletus [2] and Polemon [3] were also appointed by Hadrian, and Zeno by Julian [4].

But there is a still more important question respecting the members of the college of Alexandria—a question which was once asked by an illustrious lady respecting a learned society in the university of Oxford—what did the fellows of the Museum do? And on this we must confess ourselves nearly as much at a loss for an answer, as the respondent to the royal querist is maliciously supposed to have been. That they ate and drank, history, as we have seen, has abundantly informed us; that they possessed a magnificent library is also well known; but a little anecdote has reached us, through Vitruvius, which may suggest doubts whether it was generally used [5], at least in an honest way. It appears that one of the Ptolemies (in the passage, as it stands, there is evidently an anachronism) had instituted some games, disputations, and recitations, in honour of Apollo; and the fellows of the Museum were called upon to perform their part in the ceremony. One of the judges being absent, the name of Aristophanes was

[1] Athenæ. lib. xv. c. vi.
[2] Philostr. Vit. Dionys. p. 524.
[3] Philostr. Vit. Polem. p. 532.
[4] Julian. Epist. 5.
[5] Præf. ad lib. vii.

suggested as a proper person to supply his place; and the reason assigned was, that he had attracted attention—perhaps, we might say, had made himself singular—by his regular attendance in the library. As the recitation proceeded, the audience applauded, and applauded—Aristophanes alone refused to approve; and the only competitor, whom he condescended to notice, was one whom the audience rejected. The pit of an Alexandrian theatre was, at all times, a scene of uproar. On the present occasion it became unmanageable. But Aristophanes remained unmoved; and at last confirmed his decision by informing them, that every candidate but this *one* had 'stolen' his verses.

Attached to the museum there was also a botanical garden [1], in which Ptolemy Philadelphus had collected a variety of plants from the south, and a menagerie, or zoological garden [2], which latter science had reached such a height, and made such discoveries for the improvement of human happiness, that it was even enabled to rear pheasants for the royal table, though they were, unhappily, 'very expensive eating'—πολυτελὲς βρῶμα. Fondness, indeed, for these studies, particularly for the latter, is a characteristic of an Alexandrian age. They amuse without fatiguing—give scope for curiosity, without requiring much exercise of mind—fill the ignorant with wonder, and provide the learned with subjects intelligible to the vulgar, and on which, therefore, they can always find an audience to stare at and admire them. When old ladies have no better object for their affection, or have forgotten their religious and domestic duties, they take to cats and monkeys, and excuse their fondness for the brute creation by calling it compassion for their helplessness, just as the Zoological So-

[1] Philostratus, Vit. Apollon. vi. 24.
[2] Athenæus, xiv. p. 654.

ciety apologize for the cruelty attending its 'raree show' by talking of *science*. Whether the members of the Museum, on sacred days devoted to meditation and retirement, used to throw open their gardens to a fashionable mob of Alexandrians, as an appropriate religious exercise, writers have not informed us.

Critical discussion was another amusement; and, if we may trust Matter, whose accuracy, however, is doubtful, they appear to have had regular field-days for the purpose of this literary skirmishing:—'Les membres du Musée s'entretenaient habituellement de ces sujets; ils se distribuaient les rôles de demandans et de répondans'—*ἐνστατικοὶ καὶ λυτικοί*[1].

Writing verses was another—and verses not lightly thrown off under the impulse of the moment, or flowing into the easy forms of common metre, but elaborated by the most anxious care into shape and figure—the shape of birds, axes, hammers, triangles, and eggs. Occasionally these tasks were relieved by the business of compilation, and the treasures of the library were reproduced under a variety of light forms; for the Alexandrian readers delighted in anecdotes, marvellous stories, memoirs, journals of travels, reminiscences of one's own times, private scandal, short pithy extracts from works too grave to be read throughout; and though they had not yet arrived at regular magazines, those omnibuses of literature, which journey about the streets of the literary world monthly and weekly, to pick up every wandering scribbler who has only a few pages to go, and cannot afford a book of his own—they evidently understood (nearly as well as ourselves) the art of providing slop and puddings for the weak stomach of a sickly reading world.

[1] Porphyr. in Scholiis ad Iliad. i. 684. Valcknaer, Dissert. de Scol. p. 145.

At a later period under the Roman empire, we find Claudius adding to the original building, and apparently increasing the number of fellowships—*τοῖς ἐν τῷ* Κλαυδίῳ *νῦν σοφιστεύουσιν*[1]; and their chief business appears to have been, to read out certain histories written by the emperor himself once every year, as the statutes are ordered to be read in most colleges, or, rather, as a fixed series of lectures—'*velut in auditorio*[2].' Whether similar practices had prevailed before, is uncertain.

We may naturally expect to find that a lively war of wit was carried on within the walls of the Museum. Form a society of exclusively literary men, without religious principle and sound internal government to check them, and active serious duties to engage them in a common object, and you make a hot-bed of jealousy and rivalry. Give the combatants a ready logic, and you arm them for the battle; add an Alexandrian spirit, and the war must be interminable. Think of the little, lively, swarthy Egyptian 'catching fire at a word, and always on the *qui vive* for dispute and repartee[3],' shut up in the same precincts with the subtle, logical, contentious Greek—the Greek armed with all the arts and stratagems, the spring-traps, and gins, and lassos of the sophistical school; the Egyptian as resolved not to yield, as he was at all times to refuse payment of his taxes till nearly scourged to death, or to confess a crime even on the rack[4]. Then think of the nicknames and satire—the libels and counter-libels, the caricatures, and scandals in which both parties delighted—*ἀνεί-*

[1] Athenæ. lib. vi. c. 9. [2] Sueton. Vit. Claud. c. 45.

[3] Homines Ægypti suffusculi sunt . . . gracilenti, et aridi —ad singulos motus excandescentes, controversi, et reposcones acerrimi. Ammian. Marcell. lib. xxii. c. 16.

[4] Ælian, V. H. lib. xxii. c. 16.

μενα καὶ ἀχάλινα στόματα[1]—ἄθεα στόματα, βλάσφημοι γλῶσσαι Αἰγύπτου[2]; then of the rival sects established within the same walls; and we might suppose that all the majesty of the adjoining court, and the police of the Alexandrian Bow-street, would have been unable to maintain the peace. It is satisfactory, however, to be able to remove such apprehensions. With the exception of two cases, which are mentioned elsewhere, of death from logic, we have met with no such calamitous results but one; and even this, we will hope, is a metaphorical statement. Menedemus, the Eretrian dialectician, is certainly charged by his biographer with tendency to pugilism whenever he engaged in argument; and his opponents seem equally vivacious, for Menedemus rarely escaped without a black eye: ἐν ταῖς ζητήσεσιν ὧδε μάχιμος ἦν, ὥσθ' ὑπώπια φέρων ἀπήει[3].

But in general, the professors and fellows appear to have been pacifically inclined, and many compliments passed between them. Callimachus, among others, wrote a poem in praise of the Museum; and in the spurious Epistles of Apollonius, the learned Society of Alexandria are gratefully acknowledged 'as offering a relief from the barbarism of Greece.' Much of this is to be accounted for by the yielding, elastic nature of the philosophical principles professed. Men clad in the hard armour of Stoicism, or any other high-minded system, can scarcely encounter each other without real blows, real hurts, a real battle:—but Stoicism paid few visits to Alexandria; and men, padded with the soft pillows of scepticism and Epicurism, might fence together from morning till night, and retire without a scratch.

[1] Philo de Virtut. vol. ii. p. 570.

[2] Chrysos. Homil. in Martyr. Ægypt. tom ii. p. 699. Bened. ed.

[3] Diog. Laert. lib. i. Art. Menexed.

One more occupation of the Museum may be mentioned. It was the art of medicine—an art highly necessary to all men, but those who live temperately and exercise themselves in hardy pursuits. Moderns may well be astonished to find Plato, in his Republic, declaring that the very existence of physicians is a proof of vice in a nation; but it is singular that the early Christians seem to have taken a similar view, and to have thought that a regular discipline of the body in abstinence and endurance of labour was a far wiser way to health than 'quacking ourselves—*νοσοτρόφια*. They seem to have been rather ashamed of being ill—at any rate, ashamed of not curing themselves in a manly way. We are far from wishing to cast any slur upon the distinguished Colleges of Surgeons and Physicians, which flourished at Alexandria and which now flourish in London; but we fear they must be taken as correlatives and infallible witnesses to the self-indulgence and vicious gratifications of their respective metropolises. Alexandria, we know, was famous for introducing dissection. Its medical school soon, indeed, sunk down from experimental science into magic and astrology; but its fame lasted longer than that of any other department of the Museum. It was enough, says Ammian, to say that a physician came from Egypt [1]. It is worth remarking that this unusual demand for physic prevailed in a city expressly built by Dinochares with a view to a healthy circulation of air [2],—on a soil so fertile as to yield a centuple produce of some seeds, of wheat from seven to fifteen fold, and sometimes as high as twenty-four,—in a climate, where scarcely a day passed without clear sunshine, where the ground was covered with flowers, and, as Strabo and Am-

[1] Lib. xx. c. xvi.
[2] Diod. Sic. lib. xvii.; Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. c. 10.

mian assert, a man might almost 'believe himself in another world.'

It is evident that to become a member of this learned body by no means implied exclusion from the fashionable world. On the contrary, it was rather a passport to admission to the court circle and the royal table; and the nature of these parties might probably be learned from anecdotes of the *petits soupers* at Potsdam. Josephus[1] has left an account of the entertainment, at which Ptolemy Philadelphus is said to have received the translators of the Septuagint. The king himself took his seat in the middle of the table, and the guests ranged themselves on each side. They were served according to Jewish customs. The usual priests, prayers, and sacrifices employed on such occasions were, with great delicacy and liberality of feeling, put aside. One of the translators, a priest, was requested to stand up and offer an extempore prayer instead, which was received with loud applause. After supper, Josephus proceeds, the king began to philosophise, and proposed to them questions on physical science, intermixed with logical problems. Sometimes the royal sage illustrated his philosophical theories with a practical joke. Having once enticed a stray Stoic, Sphærus, to his table, (Stoics, as we have before said, being of no ordinary occurrence at Alexandria,) he presented him with some artificial pomegranates, and while the teeth of the philosopher were deeply embedded in the wax, begged to know, not in the most courtly tone—*ἀνεβόησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς*[2], —what he then thought of his own maxim—'that the wise man was never deceived by appearances.' But the mysteries of logic appear to have formed the favourite discussion—discussions sometimes attended with more fatal results than the mastication of paint

[1] Antiq. lib. xii. c. ii. [2] Diog. Laert. lib. vii. § 177.

and wax. The unhappy Diodorus, famed for his own invention both of the Veiled and the Horned Sophism, was one night at the royal table caught by Stilpo in a similar trap. Unable to extricate himself, he received a severe rebuke from the king, together with the nickname of Κρόνος—nearly equivalent to our English 'old fool'—which Diodorus took so much to heart, that he left the room, went home, wrote a book on the problem, and died of despair[1]. Hadrian, at a later date, is described as passing his time in proposing questions to the professors, and answering them himself[2]: and any one familiar with the private history of other literary monarchs, especially of our own Elizabeth and James I., will recognize this as no uncommon exercise of the royal prerogative. It might be amusing, and not uninstructive, to review generally this history of the alliance between royalty and literature, from Crœsus and Solon, down to Napoleon, with his donkey-mounted *savans* on their march in Egypt; and it would exhibit little advantage either to one side or the other. The independence of mind and genius, and the supremacy of temporal power, can only work together harmoniously when the two are equally balanced; and this cannot be, except where religion intervenes to give real self-respect to the philosopher, and real self-restraint to the prince. The connexion of Frederic and Voltaire, beginning in the grossest flattery and ending in the meanest recrimination, is but a sample of the whole[3].

But after the establishment of so many petty monarchies at the breaking up of the Macedonian em-

[1] Diog. Laert. lib. ii. § 1. [2] Spart. in Hadr. c. xx.

[3] One of the charges which the king condescended to bring against Voltaire, was the embezzling some odds and ends of chocolate, and pocketing wax candles, in order to indemnify himself for certain deficiencies in his promised salary—a charge not the more regal, because it was probably true.

pire, it became the fashion for courts to gather round them a tribe of literary men. Letters were written entreating philosophers, if they could not come themselves, at least to send some of their disciples [1]. Pensions, office, comfortable living, were held out as lures [2]. At times the royal mandate went beyond a lure, and Perdiccas threatened Diogenes that, if he refused to come, he (Perdiccas) would certainly be the death of him: εἰ μὴ ἔλθοι πρὸς αὐτὸν, ἀποκτενεῖν [3]. Sometimes the invitation was refused, especially by the Stoics [4]; and when it was accepted, the surly virtue of philosophy rose up occasionally in rebellion against the patronage which it condescended to accept. Even the Eretriac Menedemus risked the loss of his life from Nicocreon by criticising his card of invitation to a monthly dinner at the royal table [5]. But the whole system presents a melancholy picture; and instead of regarding it with satisfaction, as we are commonly taught to speak, it should be a warning both in its principles and effects against the vain attempt to raise by temptations of luxury and money any really good or noble creations of the human intellect. Make men of talent what they should be as a whole, and you may expect them to be a blessing and an ornament to mankind. But to make them this, they must have self-respect, high objects to work for, freedom from unworthy trammels, and retirement from the corrupting air of a luxurious court. They must have independence—just such an independence as secures them against want, while it prohibits self-indulgence. For this you must have endowments, and with endowments, institutions venerable, elevated, and sacred, to create a similar spirit

[1] See the letters of Antigonus to Zeno. Laert. lib. vii. § 7.
[2] Laert. lib. vi. § 44; lib. vi. § 38, 41; Suidas in Straton.
[3] Laert. in Diogen. [4] Laert. lib. vii.; § 185; lib. iv. § 39.
[5] Laert. lib. ii. § 1329.

in those who are living within them. Where these are to be procured without religion and the Church it is hard to say; but without them, literature and literary men, will, if they arise at all, prove only a nuisance to society, and a poison to national virtue. How far this is borne out by a review of Alexandrian literature we may see hereafter.

But before we proceed to this point, there is another office which we should expect to find discharged by the learned society of the Museum—the office of practical, as well as of speculative education. We might naturally expect to find something like Schools attached to something like a University; and it may be with some regret, though perhaps without much surprise, that we shall be unable to trace the slightest hint of such a system in the earlier times [1] of the Ptolemies. The same deficiency is observable in the history of the French philosophers who served as heralds to the French Revolution, and in the Academy of Frederic. Nothing could be more patriotic and comprehensively benevolent than their views. Their talents and lives were to be spent in spreading truth, correcting errors, reforming abuses, extending the power and knowledge of mankind, and converting this benighted earth into a paradise of happiness and freedom. But one mode—and some persons might suppose the most obvious and only mode—of accomplishing their purpose they seem to have quite overlooked: they did not attempt practically to educate the rising generation. They wrote, and published, and reaped the harvest of their labour in an ample return of popular wonderment; but the

[1] Aristarchus is indeed mentioned by Suidas as the *ἀντισχολαστὴς* of Crates; but we fear the term cannot be construed to mean two rival schoolmasters, in our modern sense of the word: at the most it would imply two rival schools of philology.

drudgery of tuition, the condescension to inferior minds, the patience and long endurance of conquering stubborn wills, and drawing out dormant faculties, and enlightening stupidity and ignorance, they left to others; if any attempt was made, it seems to have been limited to a select circle of submissive disciples, or to have taken the form of mere professorial lectures, in which the vanity of the teacher was fully indulged without the slightest sacrifice of indolence or patience. The fact is remarkable, and it is worth while to bear it in mind, when systems of education are propounded which happen to leave out the only condition, under which, with the exception perhaps of a false, momentary, and dangerous enthusiasm, we can expect to find men willing to devote themselves heartily and laboriously to the instruction of the young. Can education be carried on—has it ever been carried on—in this way, without religion to inspirit and support, as well as to direct the teacher?

At a later period, however, than the Ptolemies, Alexandria begins to assume the character most familiar to us under the notion of an University. It becomes a place of education; and the Museum must naturally have taken a considerable share in it. It is remarkable that this sudden and spontaneous demand for instruction, accompanied with the establishment of new schools in every part of the Roman empire, was simultaneous with the rise of that strong instinct of religion—or, if religion is not the word, of superstition—which preceded the formation of the New Platonic philosophy. Society had lain dead, reason was exhausted, morals corrupted, truth torn to atoms—all the higher interests and duties of life crushed under the weight of the Roman domination. Patriotism had nothing to expatiate in, and religion had become a farce; and then, when every thing seemed lost, a fresh stirring commenced beneath the

surface, and man began once more to raise his head, and cast up a longing look for some higher and better things. The same phenomenon is to be observed preparatory to the Reformation. The same may be observed now, and it marks an approaching crisis. Not only at Alexandria, but at Rome, Athens, Antioch, Marseilles, Ephesus, Rhodes, Pergamus, Smyrna, in Cappadocia, and various other parts, schools sprung up about the beginning of the Christian era, as they are springing up now, and (which is the chief point to be observed) with similar novelties and errors in their construction.

Under the old and original systems of government, both in the heathen and Christian eras, education was carried on by collegiate institutions, belonging not to the State, but to the Church. There is no doubt, that in Egypt, Persia, and other Eastern empires, there were institutions analogous to the first schools, which rose up in Christendom under the wing of our cathedrals and monasteries; and the advantages were obvious. The corporate character of these bodies contributed to ensure uniformity and stability of doctrine. They compensated for the defects of individual teachers. They stood over the pupil, from first to last, with a moral authority which controlled his passions, while it elevated his sentiments. They were enabled to take in a wider range of education; and they offered a retreat and reward to the young, whose education was finished, far better, and more congenial, than any which they are now compelled to seek in the wide world. Their independence of the State was another advantage; they were not exposed to the fluctuations of politics; they stood between the roused energies of a reason often turbulent, and of youthful passions always rebellious—between these and the supreme civil powers; and prevented those collisions, which, in the absence of such a medium,

must naturally prevail between crowds of undisciplined students and the government, which is obliged to coerce them. The German universities require a regiment to manage them; the pupils of the Ecole Polytechnique are admirable hands at a barricade; and the Roman emperors were compelled to place the under-graduates of Rome under the strict surveillance of the police [1], and to threaten unruly members with transportation to Africa. It is not said that the education of the middle ages, in these monastic bodies, was perfect, or anything like perfect. The loss of Greek literature left them without any adequate exercise for the intellect; and the authority which presided over the schools, as over the church, was often abused to tyranny, and still more often neglectfully relaxed. But the principle of educating by collegiate bodies incorporated in the Church, instead of by individuals, or shifting commissions appointed by the State, is of incalculable importance; and its abandonment by the foundation of state universities was one of the first steps to that career of insubordination both in human will and human understanding, to which we are now indebted for the calamities that beset and threaten us.

In England, and in England only, the same merciful Providence, which has interposed so often in behalf of an ungrateful people, led the Church almost unconsciously to raise up her own power within the civil power of the universities, as they emanated from the Crown, by founding colleges to receive the students under something like domestic protection. The colleges are the representative of the Church, and the university of the State; and when, by the multiplication of colleges, the circles of each were made at last to coincide, so that no one was a member of the

[1] Guizot, Civilization de l'Europe, vol. i.

university without being a member of a college, the union of Church and State was completed. The universities became consolidated with the Church; and all the dangers of political interference with the quiet sacred duties of education were prevented, while all the benefits were preserved, which might be derived from the legitimate superintendence and co-operation of the Crown.

But for our colleges, the universities would by this time have been in the hands of philosophical radicals, instead of English Churchmen. Hence the attacks which have been made on the collegiate system; hence the plans which were contrived and executed by Whig governments[1] of revolution date, for corrupting the universities through the colleges, and to which we undoubtedly owe the low state into which they had fallen previous to their recent resuscitation by their own energies; hence also the efforts to raise up rival places of education to Oxford and Cambridge, in which no such bar should exist to the diffusion of democratical principles. And hence also—that is, from the want of colleges—the great schools and universities of Christendom, previous to the development of the collegiate system, and those of heathenism, between the Ptolemæan era and the sixth century, became the focus of every mischief, which can result from a high pressure of intellectual excitement removed from all moral control. They became what our educational reformers would make of Oxford and Cambridge, and every other place where they would raise either a German university or a new-fangled 'National School.'

Crowds of students wandered about the world, picking up a little rhetoric at Athens, then running off to a course of grammar at Rome, and then settling

[1] See a curious proposal of this kind in the "Collectanea Curiosa."

for a time under a philosopher at Alexandria. Wherever an eminent popular professor fixed himself, there rose a school[1]; and students flocked together, removed from parental control, with no regulated system of thought, and no restraint upon their fancy or their life. Having full licence to choose their own teacher, they chose, as we might naturally expect, the most florid, worthless rhetorician, or the wildest enthusiast. They listened to him, as long as they liked, deifying him—(it is the constant language of Eunapius)—and worshipping him with an adulation which converted the whole tribe of professors, as Philostratus observes, into a set of 'peacocks.' As the government patronised all sects alike, and endowed[2] chairs of Stoicism, Peripateticism, Epicurism,

[1] Polemon, a celebrated sophist, says his biographer Philostratus (Vit. Sophist. art. Polem.), almost made the fortune of Smyrna by giving his lectures there.

[2] Athenæus, lib. xiii. p. 610. This was done, among others, by the Antonines at Athens, who assigned an annual stipend of 10,000 drachmas to each of the chairs—not a very liberal allowance, considering the habits and wealth of the day (Lucian. in Eunuch. Philostr. Vit. Soph. lib. ii. c. 2); but these salaries were augmented by fees. Gibbon's remark on the fact is worthy of him :—'It is remarkable,' he says, 'that the impartial favour of the Antonines was bestowed on the four adverse sects of philosophy, which they considered as equally useful, or at least as equally innocent. . . . . After banishing Epicurus, and silencing his doctrines, they recalled him—convinced, by the experience of ages, that the moral character of philosophers is not affected by the diversity of their theological speculations.'—(vol. iv. c. xv. p. 116, 4to.) Other men than Gibbon have understood that the moral and theological speculations of Epicurus—as of every other teacher pretending to the name of a philosopher—were so blended as to be inseparable; that, in fact, religion was a part of morality, and morality, of religion; and that religion could no more exist without a corresponding theology, than a man's body without his bones, or affections without an object to rest on. It is indeed remarkable, that such men as the Antonines should have considered Epicurism and Stoicism equally useful, or equally innocent.

and Platonism, with the most liberal promiscuousness, all symptoms of definiteness or stability of doctrine —or, indeed, of belief in anything but the whim of the moment—were effectually destroyed. The choice of teachers being open, the professor was compelled to court instead of governing his audience; his fees depended on his popularity; and the lamentation of Augustine is borne out by many other writers, that to cheat the professor of his pay was as common at Rome, as to insult him in the lecture-room was common at Carthage. The rivalry of these learned individuals was not confined to their chairs in the schools, where each endeavoured to establish his own supremacy, and theory after theory rose and fell like sand-hills in an hour-glass. It extended beyond the precincts[1]. Battles—and battles between opposite classes, and sometimes between different countrymen, who ranged themselves into national lectures under national professors, disturbed the streets of Athens —just as they used to disturb the streets of Oxford, before the collegiate system was formed; when Welshmen were banded against Irishmen, Englishmen against Scotchmen, and even founders of colleges were compelled to insert in their statutes, that 'Northmen should not abuse Southmen, nor Southmen Northmen.' The whole population, say both Gregory Nazianzen[2] and Eunapius, took an interest in the rival chairs; and no sooner did a vessel arrive at Athens, than men stationed 'at the quays, on the

They might as well have assented at once to two systems of astronomy as equally true, one of which made the sun go round the earth, and the other the earth round the sun. The real fact was, that no philosophy at all was taught in these chairs; and the schools had dwindled down into mere theatres for rhetorical display. All principle had vanished, when contradictions were equally patronised.

[1] Eunapii Vit. Proæres. p. 133.

[2] Oratio in S. Basilium.

heights, in the streets,' seized on the youthful candidates for academical honours, and carried them off in triumph to the favourite professor, and the boarding-house which he patronised. The same writers give an amusing account of the process of matriculation among the gentlemen undergraduates of Athens. No sooner was a freshman announced than the whole body waited on him, and led him off to the baths, in a triumphal procession, insulting him and abusing him the whole way, till they arrived at the door, which they assaulted, and, to use an academical phrase, 'sported,' and left the poor man half dead with alarm and vexation; the discipline appears to have been so severe and painful to an ingenuous mind, that Eunapius expresses the deepest gratitude to his tutor Proæresius, for having interfered to save him from it; and Gregory, in his funeral oration on Basil, congratulates himself on having been able to perform the same kind office for that dear friend. Other traits occur in scattered writings which imply alike a coarse and undisciplined, and almost brutal tone of mind in the ancient universities; and though we are not to confound mere juvenile ebullitions of vivacity with a recklessness and want of feeling, or to deny that doors are sometimes 'sported' at Oxford and Cambridge, and bonfires lighted at times in one college, and fireworks disseminated in another, an Englishman may well be proud of the general disciplined gentlemanly feeling which pervades his collegiate universities, and which so keeps down the rude, insolent spirit too generally prevalent in assemblages of young men, that with all their freedom of association quarrelling is most rare, and duelling—the very life of a German student—altogether unknown. All this, also, is owing to our collegiate discipline; and unless we wish to see the young men of England reduced, in tone and habits of life, to the level of German students, or, what may be

still worse, to that of the medical tyros in London, we shall not suffer any new system to be introduced, which, though it increased the number of students in our old universities, would leave them without the domestic shelter of a college. Far rather shall we join in the efforts, which the governors of the London Hospitals are, it is understood, now making, to provide them with similar institutions for the accommodation of the medical profession.

Of the effects of this style of education it is scarcely necessary to speak. If on education, as it is said, depends the fate of a country, to this we must ascribe the formation of that spirit under which nation after nation fell a prey to Rome; through which Rome itself, exhausted with civil wars, sunk under the tyranny of the emperors, and the arms of the north; and liberty, virtue, reason, and truth disappeared from the heathen world, until Christianity came down from heaven to revive their ashes. The great mass of Alexandrian literature has perished by its own acknowledged worthlessness. The Greek of the later days is almost valueless—the Roman is but a faint copy from the Greek; and the only portion which is original and commanding was called into existence by the crimes and follies of a most profligate age. When strength of mind again appears, it is in the form of Christianity; and Guizot's observation on France is true of the whole of that period, 'that with all the advantages of patronage, establishments, public favour, and prescriptive influence possessed by the heathen universities, it was in the Christian schools alone that any advance was made by human reason, or any contribution stored up for the benefit of truth[1].'

[1] Guizot, sur la Civilisation de l'Europe.

But we must proceed to one more and the last point.

With this tendency to remove restrictions, both on the private life and course of study of the pupil, and on the extravagances and fancies of the teacher, there was naturally coupled a phenomenon, which has revived in the modern parallel period—an enormous multiplication of books. We must not join those who would abolish the printing-press, or prohibit reading; but we may hold, as the wisest of men have held, that much reading without much thinking, and either, or both together, without a living moral power standing by to interpret, explain, correct, apply, discriminate, and confirm written teaching—to prepare the mind for receiving it, and to impress it on the mind when received, by a system of catechetical instruction—is not merely useless, but is most highly pernicious.

A book cannot speak; it cannot answer interrogatories; it cannot rebuke presumption; it lies powerless in our hands; it rouses no shame by its presence; it provokes no reluctant curiosity; it stimulates no industry, except in minds of the highest order, and in subjects intrinsically inviting; it cannot compel attention, nor punish neglect. The mind sits listlessly and indolently waiting for the ideas as they come, without taking trouble to anticipate, arrange, or sift them, and looking only to be amused; and the living principle within us soon learns to domineer over the dead letter, to pronounce on it as a judge; to criticise and pervert; to make it the mere echo of itself; to teach instead of being taught. Unlimited to one class of subjects, it ranges over the wide field of literature, picking up a smattering of everything, and knowing little of any. It will read for display, because to study for truth's sake is a painful, laborious

process; and either a meretricious rhetoric, or a captious logic, or a farrago of bare facts, will be the object of its pursuit, because these only will enable a man to gain an easy applause in ordinary society. Hence conceit, arrogance, frivolity, and the whole tribe of literary vices. Hence also the pretension to an universal knowledge—to something which may enable the possessor to shine on every subject and in every company. And as rhetoric, logic, and what is called general information, have each this advantage, we find them all the prevailing fashion in the Alexandrian æra, as well as in the ages preceding the Reformation, and in our own.

Nor must we forget the inevitable result of a multifarious reading without a guide—the loss of truth—that truth which is but one, and which few can keep in sight, when wandering over a variety of systems. Hence mainly the syncretistic principle of the Alexandrian school—a principle exhibited in the very first formation of the Ptolemæan library. Demetrius Phalereus was especially enjoined[1] to collect together *all the writings in the world.* The king, it is added, 'wrote letters to every king and governor, entreating them to send him every kind of work,' poets, novel-writers, orators, sophists, physicians, medico-sophists, historiographers, 'and others,' whatever the precise character of these authors may have been. When he inquired of the librarian how many had been accumulated, he was reminded not only of the Jewish scriptures yet unobtained, but of a 'multitude of works still lying hid among the Ethiopians, Indians, Persians, Elamites, Babylonians, Assyrians, Chaldæans, and Latins[2].' And, according to Cedrenus[3],

[1] Epiphan. de Mens. et Pond. § 9. Joseph. Ant. lib. xii. c. 11. [2] Epiphan. ib.
[3] Hist. Comp. p. 136, ed. Xylander.

he even procured the translation into Greek, not only of the Old Testament, but of Chaldæan, Egyptian, and Latin works, to the amount of 100,000 volumes. We must be cautious in receiving such statements, but the principle is allowed.

The next step to the formation of such a library[1] was the creation of a similar literature; and never was a parallel more remarkable than between the literature of Europe in the last 200 years, and that which rose up in Egypt under the patronage of the Ptolemies, to pave the way first for a sceptical philosophy, then for a frivolous physical science, as it is called, and then for pantheism: but this subject is too large and important to be treated cursorily, and must be reserved for another occasion.

But the whole subject of popular literature requires the deepest consideration. The press is pouring out every day a tide of books, which distract the attention, weaken the judgment, corrupt the taste, and defy the criticism of the public by their very multitude. Every one of us, young or old, man or woman, fool

[1] The history of the Alexandrian library is perplexed; but for those who wish to enter into it, the following works may be referred to:—Strabo, Geograp. lib. xiii. p. 609; Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxii.; Plutarch, Apophtheg. Reg.; Athenæus, lib. i. c. 3; Vitruvius, Præfat. lib. vii.; Josephus, Antiquit. xii. 2; Contra Apion, ii. 7; Irenæus, iii. 25; Clemens Alexandrin. Stromat. lib. i. c. 22; Cyrill. Hierosol. Catechet. iv. 34; Epiphanius de Mens. et Ponder. 9; Hieronymus Comment. in Danielem, lib. xi; August. Civit. Dei, xviii. 42. Besides the following moderns, Justus Lipsius de Bibliot. 11; Bonamy Mém. de l'Académie des Inscriptions, ix. 10; Bech, Specimen Hist. Bibliot. Alexand.; Sainte Croix, Magasin Encyclop. tom. v. p. 433; Reinhard, Ueber die letzten Schicksaler; Matter sur l'Ecole d'Alexandrie, vol. i. p. 47; Guericke on the Catechetical School; Fabricius, Biblioth. Græc. ed. Harles, vol. iii. p. 500. We must not forget the work of the learned Joachim Maderus, who has given an account of all the libraries in the world, including those which were collected before the flood;—'De Libris et Bibliothecis Antediluvianis.'

or wise, thinks himself able to say something, which may catch the public eye, and raise himself either money or notoriety. The whole world is become a great school, where all the pupils have turned themselves into teachers; and the ravenous appetite of an idle people, always craving for some new excitement or amusement, and ready to swallow the most unwholesome food, is daily stimulating the market. What should we say if man had the power of so volatilising a grain of arsenic, that its effluvium should spread over a whole country, entering into every house, and penetrating to the most vital parts of the body? And yet, until it is shown that the human mind is good itself and a source of good,—that it is not, what we know it to be, save only when purified by religion, corrupt itself, and a corrupter of others: this power, which every man now possesses and so many exercise, of diffusing their thoughts over the world, and insinuating them into the heart of a nation, is in reality the power of spreading a pestilential miasma.

And therefore the subject of popular literature is a question of deep anxiety; and the Church ought without delay to examine it, and to provide a literature for this country, which, if it cannot expel the present from the market, may at least supply the wants, and prevent the infection of the sounder part of the population. Some steps to this end have already been taken, and it is to be hoped they will be followed up. Instead of being alarmed at the assertion so cunningly made in order to drive truth out of the world, that every science and art should be cautiously kept apart, and religion and politics be confined to one province of their own, let it be boldly maintained that religion and politics have no such separate province—that they are the lords and masters of the whole range of science; with a right to interfere and

overrule the moment, though not before, their laws are impugned in any part; and demanding to be recognised *in all*—to have their names proclaimed and their decrees registered *in all*—in allegiance to their paramount authority.

We cannot indeed bring men to believe, true as it is, that to write is not to be wise—that to read is not to learn—that literature is no proof of enlightenment. Talking much, we know from the highest authorities, is a sign of folly; listening greedily to the idle talk of others is no great symptom of sense; and whether we hear with ears or eyes, and talk with tongue or pen, it matters little.

But we may by great exertions construct a fresh literature less mischievous than the present—a new river, instead of the ditch-water of the Thames. We may at least fumigate the press; and for this purpose every book written should be imbued and impregnated with sound principles, both religious and political. Poetry, history, philosophy, travels, novels, reviews, newspapers, grammars, every thing should contain in them the great truths, which it is required to inculcate on the human mind. Horne Tooke and Cobbett wrapt up their democratical poisons in syntax and etymology. The Jesuits made even the Gradus ad Parnassum a disseminator of popery. Give me the making of your ballads, said a keen observer of mankind, and I care little who makes your laws. And it is because we have neglected these simple lessons, that boys can scarcely find a history of the day which does not make them admire rebellion and despise obedience—or a book on morals, which does not set religion aside—or a poem, which is not a pander to some silly sentiment, or some vicious passion.

I have here thrown together a few observations, which have occurred in examining the rise and pro-

gress of the Alexandrian philosophy. No system of philosophy falls from the clouds; it is the growth of time and circumstances, and preceded by many symptoms—often slight, and at first sight fanciful, but to a careful observer, very real. It was when a belief in a definite system of revealed religious truth had been destroyed by popular licentiousness, by the bad policy of kings, by the extravagance of rationalism, by the corruptions of the professed teachers of the truth, and the dissensions of those who rebelled from it—that reason fell back on a new religious creed, invented by itself; full, if we trust to those whose principles had overthrown the old creed, of the grossest superstition and absurdity. Doubt and scepticism had left the human heart without any thing to satisfy its cravings, and the human intellect without foundation or support; and both heart and intellect fell prostrate under a new system of doctrine, which before any one would acknowledge it, was compelled to take the worst form of the old. It gave again to the educated few truths which the sceptic and the sophist had covered with ridicule; but gave them mixed with falsehoods and stripped of the only authority, on which they could legitimately be embraced—the authority of a definite revelation, committed to the guardianship of a Church. Its spirit entered into the populace as well as into philosophers; and instead of atheism, it engendered a blind superstition. Magic, astrology, divination, fanaticism—which received, with open arms, the first madman or impostor, who pretended to communicate with heaven—succeeded to popular irreligion. Those centuries, like ours, had in abundance their Irvings, and Southcotes, and Thoms, and Bryans, and Owens, and Matthews, in the persons of their Alexanders [1] and Apolloniuses, and the whole

[1] Lucian, vol. ii. p. 207.

bigoted and credulous train, who first embraced Christianity without due allegiance to the authority of the Church, and then fell away into the ranks of the Gnostics.

The circumstances which preceded the growth of this spirit were the same as in our own day—luxury—commerce—manufactures—a commixture of people—accumulations of the populace in large cities—habits of lawlessness and self-indulgence—the destruction of old institutions, civil as well as religious—the breaking up of great hierarchies—the creation of ill-governed schools—the substitution of *instruction* for *education*—the diffusion of general information in the place of sound practical knowledge—the encouragement of physical science in opposition to a deep philosophy—the spread of habits of criticism, and disputation, and scepticism—civilization (so called) mistaken for improvement—the encouragement of literary men apart from religious principles, or positive duties—the unregulated increase of books—and an universal adulation and subjection of mind, not to the legitimate authority of truth, but to a tyrant, or to fashion, or to public opinion; as a parasite submits to the master who feeds him, or a popular demagogue fawns upon his mob, and yields without struggle to the pressure from without. And now in Europe, exactly in proportion as these causes have operated, Christianity is giving way beneath an invading pantheism. In Germany, in France, even among educated men in England, whose education has not been carried on in the great schools of the Church, or on the principles of the Church, pantheism is an avowed creed. Among the dregs of our population, though under no classical name, the same spirit is working. Socialism is a vulgar pantheism; and that it will gain ground, and prevail to a considerable extent, we cannot doubt, any more than that a seed will thrive in a

soil well fitted for its reception. Whether Providence has in store for us any aid to meet and expel it—any resuscitation of his Church—any wide-spreading calamity, which may rouse men from their dreams, and throw them back on the realities of the Church—or that Church will be left, amidst the flood, a small and narrow ark, still holding the truth committed to it above the waters, and in the face of the world, though few receive it—it is not for us to prophesy. But *man cannot be an atheist:* and when atheism is excluded, and the truth which comes from God is rejected as false, what remains but to fill up the void by a system invented by man, and, in flying from a Catholic religion, to fall down and worship an idol?

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